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ABSTRACT

The study described in the first part of this two-part document identified the kind of ongoing support that would be most beneficial to all those concerned in the employment of young people with disabilities in England and Wales. Semistructured interviews were conducted with employers, representatives of preparation and placement agencies, and people with disabilities. Findings indicated that young people with disabilities are likely to have better access to employment if their general needs as young people during the transition from school to employment are addressed. Barriers to employment, such as physical access, lack of adapted transport, and prejudice, must also be addressed. Recommendations included the following: development of a "named person" system of support for young people with disabilities during the transition period; an expanded core curriculum that will foster autonomy, appropriate understanding by the learners of their own disabilities, and both self-advocacy skills and the skills needed to make best use of the "named person" or advocate; interagency collaboration; a referral system for young adults who become disabled; further testing and exploration of the support-led model; subsidy provision to employers who employ people who have been out of work for over a year; multiagency staff development; and an exploration of the attainment of adult status. Appendixes describe the study methoodology, list the participants, and present the study instruments; 32 references are included. Part 2 consists of three papers, by Deborah Cooper, Alistair Kent and Colin Hickman, and Elizabeth McEvoy respectively. The papers offer a guide to the United Kingdom vocational training scene and describe two important initiatives concerning employment and people with disabilities. (CML)

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Further Education Unit

Working Together?

A series of studies carried out for the UK contribution to the OECD/CERI Disabled Action Programme

Enabled to Work

Support into employment for young people with disabilities

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Further Education Unit

Working Together?

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The OECD/CERI Disabled Action Programme.

In 1978, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of the Department for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) began work upon a major Disabled Action Programme. The initiative was supported by a grant from the USA Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

During the early part of the Programme, a number of reports on significant issues, including publications on integration at school and the transition to work were produced. Between 1982 and 1986, work on the theme of Transition to Adult and Working Life was undertaken and its outcomes subsequently summarised in the CERI publications, *Young People with Handicaps: The Road to Adulthood* (1986) and *Towards a Unified Concept of Transition* (1986), both of which offer a discussion of the many issues emerging from the Programme's activities.

Adult and working life

Recently the Programme has been concerned with aspects of adult life for people with disabilities, with a particular emphasis on preparation for employment. A conceptual framework was drawn up by the CERI experts that identified four key inter-related objectives for the transition of *all* young people; these were:

- employment, useful work and valued activity;
- personal autonomy, independence and adult status;
- social interaction, community participation, leisure and recreation;
- roles within the family.

Transition should be seen as a total process, that unites these aspects into a *coherent* whole but that is also *continuous* as a young person moves from school through continuing education and training, to work and independent living.

The last phase of the CERI project looked particularly at dimensions of transition, such as the changing roles of parents and the agencies involved with them and young people; preparation and support for employment; the part played by assessment; and the different criteria used by agencies in deciding who is eligible for programmes and services.

The UK contribution

The feasibility study

In 1988, the DES invited FEU to undertake a feasibility study for a

possible UK contribution to the CERI Programme. This was carried out within tight deadlines by Matthew Griffiths, National Education and Training Officer for MENCAP, advised by FEU, HMI and representatives from other national organisations. The findings of the feasibility study are summarised in Bulletin Number 1, *Transition to Adult Life for People with Disabilities* in the series of three that describes the UK work.

The findings of the feasibility study indicated that the development of inter-agency collaboration should be an important part of any UK work and that exploration of certain aspects of transition would form a valuable contribution both to special needs work in the UK and to the CERI programme. These aspects were:

- the role of new technology in supporting learners with special needs who were experiencing transition;
- the support needs of young people with disabilities and their employers during initial employment;
- the changing role of parents during transition.

The feasibility study also identified existing examples of innovative practice that would both benefit from involvement in the UK project and enrich its outcomes.

Working Together?

FEU was commissioned by the DES to co-ordinate and manage a contribution to the CERI programme, based on the recommendations of the feasibility study. Work on three major studies began in June 1988. Invitations to contribute were also extended to organisations involved in new activities that showed effective inter-agency collaboration in those areas of transition to be explained in the project.

The central principles

The project took three principles as central to its work:

- *that all young people have a right to adult status;*
- *that the empowerment of young people and their families was at the heart of this transition to adult status;*
- *that the role of professionals was to work together and with young people and their families to achieve empowerment and adult status.*

The series of studies

Three *major studies* were undertaken:

- *New Technology, Disability and Special Educational Needs*

  Tom Vincent, Open University

- *Enabled to Work: Support into Employment for Young People with Disabilities*

  Matthew Griffiths, MENCAP

- *Self-Advocacy and Parents: Self-Advocacy and its Impact on the Parents of Young People with Disabilities*

  Alison Wertheimer

In each of these studies, the experiences of young people with disabilities and their families, recounted by the people themselves, provide the starting point for analysis and recommendations.

Papers describing other innovative work were also included these were:

- *Access to HE: Students with Disabilities at the Open University* - Derek Child, Open University;
- *Self-Advocacy and Advocacy for Parents of Young People with Disabilities and Special Needs* - Philippa Russell, Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children;
- *Improving Employment Opportunities for Deaf People: The Provision of Vocational Training through the Medium of Sign Language* - Alistair Kent, RNID; Colin Hickman, Weald College of FE;
- *The National Council for Vocational Qualifications and Remploy: A Major Two-Year Project* - Elizabeth McEvoy, NCVQ/Remploy;
- *Education and Training: An Introduction to Some Education and Training Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities in the United Kingdom* - Deborah Cooper, Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.

The last three papers form part of the *Enabled to Work: Support into Employment for Young People with Disabilities* publication.

An associated project

An important FEU/REPLAN project was closely linked to *Working Together?; The Development of Self-Advocacy Skills with Long-Term Unemployed Adults with Disabilities through the Use of Portfolios*. This project examined the sorts of learning experiences that facilitated self-advocacy as well as the support and training needs of professionals who were developing self-advocacy relationships with their clients.

Common issues

The issues common to all the *Working Together?* activities are fully explored in the last of the three bulletins describing the project. They are outlined briefly here:

- the apparent paradox of *supporting empowerment*:
  - what does this mean for individual professionals?
  - how can services work together to make sure it happens?
- *the shift in power* during transition from professionals or parents to learner:
  - what support do professionals and parents need to meet their changing role?

- the need for *continuity of support* for learners and their families during transition:
  - — who provides this?
- the importance of *informal links and systems*:
  - — how do service systems work together in a way that strengthens rather than supplants these?
- the vital role of *advocacy* during transition:
  - — who has the opportunity to develop self-advocacy skills?
  - — how can professionals plan for their development with young people?
  - — what are the implications for families of young people involved in the advocacy movement?
- the importance of *assessment* in identifying both the *potential* and the *support needs* of people with disabilities as they move through further and higher education and into employment:
  - — how can assessment be co-ordinated in the post-school years?
  - — what sorts of systems most effectively meet individual needs?
  - — should resources be allocated to individual learners or to an organisation?
- the need to transfer *instrumentality*, taking control, in one area of a young person's life to other areas:
  - — how can agencies work together to facilitate this?
- the recognition that transition to adulthood takes time and that we generally give least time to those who need the most;
- the recognition that adult status can be lost or gained at any time in adult life; there are many transitions;
- the development of advocacy work cannot go on in a vacuum:
  - — how can more real choice in the real world be made possible for people with disabilities?
- the difficulties experienced by young people, their families and professionals, when a continued need for physical care may seem to undermine much of the transition process:
  - — how can services work together to support transition for *all* young people, regardless of their degree of *physical* dependence?

Each of these issues is addressed in *Working Together?* Good practice is highlighted and recommendations made that apply to education, health, social services and voluntary agencies.

Inter-agency collaboration

Each of the studies examined the need for effective inter-agency

collaboration in their particular areas; but the management and co-ordination of the project itself revealed interesting lessons for collaborative work. These are discussed in the final bulletin in the Project series.

Inter-agency guidance and support for *Working Together?*

The whole of the UK contribution was supported by a Consultative Committee representing *21 agencies* either involved in the work or with an interest in the outcomes. Agencies from the statutory and voluntary sector were included, as well as those representing people with disabilities. Each of the major studies had its own steering group of experts in that particular field. Details of the Committee and steering group for this study are given in Appendix G.

The consultant to the UK Contribution was Matthew Griffiths, MENCAP.

Recommendations

Significant recommendations that should influence national and local policy are made in the three major studies of *Working Together?* Some are specific to a particular aspect of transition but others are common. Amongst the latter was one which FEU hopes to pursue in collaboration with other agencies; this is the piloting of a 'Kurator' or advocate system similar to that used in Denmark.

Other organisations will have their own priorities in the uses they make of this work. But, a word of warning; not all people with disabilities warm to the idea of inter-agency collaboration. They are not excited by the prospect of omnipotent multi-service intrusion into every aspect of their lives. What does inspire them is the development of their own power, their own right to speak for themselves, their own potential. *Working Together?* aims to further that development.

Pat Hood,
Project Director,
FEU

Further Education Unit

Enabled to Work

Support into employment for young people with disabilities

Matthew Griffiths
With contributions from
Deborah Cooper, Alistair Kent,
Colin Hickman and Elizabeth McEvoy

Further Education Unit

FEU aims to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom by:

- reviewing and evaluating the range of existing curricula and programmes;
- determining priorities and recommending improvements;
- carrying out curriculum, studies, development and evaluation;
- disseminating FE curriculum information.

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Foreword

As a society, we make assumptions about the kinds of lives that people with disabilities should lead. As professionals we need to challenge reduced expectations of their contribution to our community.

This study takes two basic human rights as axiomatic; the right to full adult status of all adults, regardless of their disability and, as a vital indicator of that status, the right to the same opportunities for employment as others. **Matthew Griffiths** describes the experiences of young people with disabilities, their employers and the agencies who helped them into employment, and stresses the continuous, coherent support needed by these young people as they begin employment. He explores the important, although sometimes ambiguous, role played by parents in providing this support and points out that, because of the absence of any other single agency or person to take on this role, parents may continue to exercise a degree of instrumentality in young people's lives that makes appropriate separation and transition difficult for both the learners and their families.

The report makes a strong case for the existence of a *named person* or *advocate* and suggests the Danish 'Kurator' system as a possible model. A named person would transcend agency boundaries and serve as an enabler with, and on behalf of, the learner, drawing together agencies into a contract that had negotiated common objectives as its basis. This would constitute an individual programme plan that placed the person with the disability as its centre.

All those interviewed by Matthew Griffiths shared a perception of the basic skills and degree of personal effectiveness needed for a young person entering employment. These are not new to us and have been identified elsewhere by the Training Agency and FEU as well as others involved in pre-vocational education. This study, however, pursues the implications of the *employability package* for those responsible for preparing young people with disabilities for adult life and offers some guiding principles:

- School and post-school educational experience must be based on the assumption that *employment is the aim for all young people.*
- Young people with disabilities must have *access to the same pre-vocational and vocational training programmes and vocational qualifications systems as their peers,* and must arrive at them with the *same sort of preparatory experiences.*
- The key to effective preparation is the *entitlement* to an *expanded core curriculum* for young people with disabilities.
- The vital components of successful employment are *effective*

assessment of capability, the *identification of support needs* and strategies for providing *unified, continuous support* to employer and young person.

These initiatives, described in the second part of this document are shown in action as agencies work together to ensure equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The national and local lessons to be drawn from this work are clear; an ordinary working life can be achieved by people with disabilities. Employers facing demographic change, cannot afford to ignore or waste their potential contribution. These young people's needs are not significantly different from other young people's nor is their right to the dignity and status of work.

Pat Hood,
Development Officer,
FEU

Matthew Griffiths is Education and Training Advisor for MENCAP and is known for his work in both further education and the voluntary sector. Matthew is particularly interested in people with communications disabilities and, amongst his other commitments, is vice-chairman of Voluntary Organisations for Communication and Language (VOCAL).

Other contributers

Deborah Cooper is Director of Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.

Alistair Kent is Director of Education for the Royal National Institute for the Deaf.

Colin Hickman is Vice-Principal of Weald Tertiary College.

Elizabeth McEvoy is project worker on the NCVQ/Remploy project and involved also in an FEU project on NVQs and learners with special needs.

Introduction

About 16,000 young people with disabilities leave school each year in the UK (NACEDP, 1986). In addition, an unknown number of young people become disabled in their teens and early 20s, when they have already completed their full-time education. Their disabilities may arise suddenly as the result of injury or illness, or may develop gradually as the result of the progression of an existing or new condition.

All these young people have the right to as active an adult life as others and have growing expections that they will make a full transition to adulthood alongside their non-disabled peers.

One of the key elements commonly held to be central to adult status is paid employment. If such value is placed on employment, it is vital that young people with disabilities have access to it. This paper, therefore, explores the issues surrounding the gaining and sustaining of employment by young people with disabilities and focuses particularly on the way in which support networks could be used by young people to give them the best opportunities to find and keep jobs.

People with disabilities are all too seldom heard talking about their own experiences of work and their aspirations, but in this study their perceptions and ambitions form the basis for recommendations of support systems they would wish to use.

Because young people with disabilities are different from their peers only in the disability itself and in the perceptions which surround it, two major aspects of support needs are examined:

- those common to all young people seeking to enter employment in the UK in the late 1980s;
- those specific to young people with a disability, which need to be met in addition to the generally required support.

To meet this, Chapter 1 explores the nature of adult status and the ways in which employment and unemployment influence it, while Chapter 2 looks at the employment situation in the UK at present and the implications of current trends for the vocational education, training and support of all young people.

The issues raised in these two chapters, which are concerned with current attitudes to employment in the UK as well as the realities of the employment market, are as relevant to young people with disabilities as to all other young people. They form the context within which the additional support needs of young people with disabilites must be considered.

Most young people making the transition to adulthood need

considerable support because of the complexity of the process in a sophisticated industrialised society. Entry to the world of employment forms one strand of the transitional process.

Young disabled people face all the difficulties of transition of adolescents and young adults in general. They may also have additional difficulties because of their disabilities. Chapter 3 examines these.

Perceptions of the employability of young people with disabilities and the support they may need to become and remain employed are examined in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5 young people themselves give their own experiences of employment and describe for themselves the times at which they think extra support would have helped them succeed.

Chapter 6 contains a discussion of the issues concerned with these support needs and recommendations are made for ways in which existing support could be enhanced.

Appendix A contains a description of the methodology used to gain information from the young people, their employers, and the agencies which prepare them for employment.

Appendix B lists the employers, people with disabilities and employment placement agencies who participated in this project.

Appendix C consists of the four questionnaires used as a basis for gathering views and perception.

Enabled to Work is in two related parts. The first, longer, study was undertaken by Matthew Griffiths as a major element of the UK contribution to the OECD/CERI Disabled Action Programme. The second part, consisting of three papers, offers a guide to the UK vocational training scene and describes two important initiatives concerned with employment and people with disabilities. These papers are:

- An introduction to Source Education and Training opportunities for Young People with Disabilities in the United Kingdom, by Deborah Cooper
- Alistair Kent and Colin Hickman's Improving Employment Opportunities for - Deaf People the Provision of Vocational Training through the medium of sign language
- The NCVQ and Remploy: A Major Two-Year Project, by Elizabeth McEvoy.

Part One

1. Adult status and the significance of employment in the transition to adult life

Adult status is easy to recognise but difficult to define, but in any society it is accorded to those who meet that particular society's criteria for adulthood. These criteria are centred on physical maturity, personal autonomy, productive activity and separation from parents, as individuals develop the capacity to take responsibility for themselves and others. This change in status and identity is a major transition.

In small and technologically unsophisticated societies, childhood can end relatively abruptly and transition to adulthood is brief. The onset of puberty and various social rituals can give immediate access to full adult status in every aspect of the individual's life.

In complex industrialised societies there are many more aspects of adulthood, many different roles to be performed and a wide variety of skills to be acquired. Transition to adulthood is protracted and complex and the process does not encompass all aspects of the young person's life at the same time. Adulthood is not recognised as a single event evident to everyone, instead a number of small changes in status and recognitions of the progress towards adult status take place over a number of years.

Adolescence is the period when the transition takes place which will take the young person from childhood to adulthood. Each transitional change brings with it both new opportunities and new responsibilities.

The physical changes of puberty, which usually begin in the early teens, mark the beginning of the process. The young person is reaching physical maturity and is now seen as moving towards adult status. However, depending on a number of factors including culture and social class, adult status does not become a reality until between four to ten years after puberty. Physical adulthood does not confer adult status until the adolescent transition is completed.

A major marker of transition for many young people is the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 16.

Traditionally this meant the beginning of employment and a major shift towards adult status for the young person. Instead of being dependent members of the family, for whom everything was provided by others, young people would become capable of providing for themselves. They could even begin to contribute to the family income instead of being supported by it. Changes in the labour market described in Chapter 3 mean that this direct form of transition to adult status is made presently by comparatively few school-leavers.

Most young people who would have entered employment on leaving school, now move on to a vocational or pre-vocational course in

further education, or to a Youth Training Scheme, before entering full employment. (See Cooper, 1989 for an outline of these programmes.) Transition is delayed and young people remain financially dependent on their parents for longer than in the past.

Confusingly though, other recognitions of adult status are given to 16- and 17-year-olds before they reach legal adulthood at 18. These include:

- the right to have sexual intercourse
- the right to marry
- the right to learn to drive
- the right to join the armed forces

At 18 a young person is legally an adult and has access to all the rights, experiences and obligations of adulthood.

Legal adulthood and physical maturity are the basis for adult status. However, most 18-year-olds would not be regarded as having *full* adult status. Most young people in the UK are probably in their early 20s before they are accorded full adult status by other adults or think of themselves as fully adult despite, for example, legal recognition of their adulthood.

Adult status is, however, accorded to young people who marry during their teens and to young mothers. They have taken on that responsibility to, and for, others, which is central to adult status. The shift of responsibility which is central to the transition is illustrated below, and young people with adult responsibilities are accorded that status even though they may not fulfil other criteria such as age, experience or personal autonomy.

The shift of responsibility from childhood to full adult status

Phase	*Level of responsibility*
Childhood	Others are responsible for making every provision for the child. 'Childhood exemption' (Gagnon, 1977) also ensures that everthing that a child does is viewed in a way which protects it from responsibility. Children are seen as not understanding the consequences of their actions. For example, a child under the age of ten cannot be charged with a criminal offence.
Late childhood/ early adolescence	Others are still totally responsible for making all provisions. The child is, however, learning to take more responsibility for itself. 'Childhood exemption' is beginning to fall away, and the child is increasingly judged by, and held accountable for, its own actions.

Mid to late adolescence	Although others may still be providing totally or in part for the young person, he/she is taking considerable responsibility for his/her own life and is learning or beginning to provide for him/herself. 'Childhood exemption' has almost fully lapsed in many areas of life.
Early adulthood	Full responsibility for oneself. Managing one's own affairs, being instrumental in decision-making about one's own life. Individual now accountable for his/her own actions and their conseqences although some allowences are still made for youth and inexperience.
Full adult status	Responsiblity for oneself and others, either as part of a family or as part of society.

The aim of the transitional process can be divided into broad areas of life, (Young People with Handicaps: The Road to Adulthood OECD/CERI, 1986). These are:

- personal autonomy (full responsibility for one's own life);
- productive activity (economic self-sufficiency);
- social interaction and community participation (taking an adult role in society);
- roles within the family (being a non-dependent son or daughter, a spouse or a parent).

In each of these areas, a vital indicator of the successful achievement of 'adulthood' is the *range* of choices available to the individual, rather than any one particular choice or pattern of choices.

The significance of employment is, therefore, not whether one is actually employed or unemployed, but whether one has *chosen* either of these options.

Young people with disabilities often lack the power to make this choice - they are unemployed not because they do not wish to work, but because work is not available for them. This affects their own perception of their status as well as the perceptions of others of their adult status.

There is no doubt that even in an economic climate in which unemployment affects a significant number of people, work is still perceived (OECD/CERI, 1988) as a major indicator of adulthood and a proof of having an active role in society. It is not the only indicator of adult status, but provides *access* to many areas of personal autonomy, productive activity and responsibility which are central to adult status.

Why is work valued so highly?

Employment is valued for itself and for what it can provide. The work can give satisfaction but many workers do not seem to feel that their job is satisfying in itself. When Blauner (1960) asked workers whether they would choose the same occupation again, he found that although over 80% of mathematicians, lawyers and journalists said they would make the same choice, less than 22% of unskilled car and steel workers gave the same reply. Although they did not wish to stop working, they did not feel that the work they were engaged in was enjoyable in itself.

Even when job satisfaction is low, however, work fulfils many of the requirements of adult status. It provides an income which enables the individual to be economically self-sufficient and therefore able to:

- set up an independent household;
- make choices of clothing and activities which parents would refuse to finance;
- have an active social life;
- take responsibility for providing for others.

Other areas in which work contributes to adult status are described in *Disabled Youth : A Right to Adult Status* (OECD/CERI, 1988) as:

- personal identity;
- self-esteem;
- responsibility;
- dignity;
- acceptance as an adult in society.

as well as other major functions such as:

- the feeling that a person is making a contribution to the community;
- providing opportunities for meeting new people;
- providing a structure and regular routine for the day;
- providing a context in which a young person can learn to be an adult and take on adult roles.

In Project Paper 50 *An Ordinary Working Life* (King's Fund. 1984), the authors also associate work with a variety of gains:

- status as a worker and an adult
- a structure to one's life
- control over one's life
- daytime occupation
- social relationships
- a valued self-image

as well as with an income.

These views are shared by other writers, including Wansbrough and Cooper (1980) who look at the additional gains which young people with disabilities receive from employment. Work provides:

- a way of shedding one's disabled status and joining the normal world of workers;
- a visible measure of normality. There are few other such visible ways in which young disabled people can demonstrate their abilities;
- self-esteem, which comes from making a contribution rather then being a recipient;
- identification as a worker proves one's ability to meet society's expectations of an adult. These are particularly important for young people who may be more dependent in some areas of life than their peers, in a culture which places a low value on dependency and a high value on autonomy.

There are major implications for young people with disabilities who want to work and who are unable to obtain or sustain paid employment. In common with their non-disabled peers, they are likely to experience:

- lack of money or poverty
- low status in society
- low self-esteem
- decreased structure in their lives
- decreased control over their lives
- fewer choices of daytime occupation
- fewer opportunities for responsibility
- perceived lack of dignity
- impoverished social contact
- lack of a valued self-image
- lack of acceptance as an adult in society

In short, this is an impoverishment of many of the factors which give meaning to adult life and which are gained either through employment or through other legitimate roles such as being a student or mother.

For young people with disabilities, however, there will be additional difficulties in challenging the child-like, financially and socially dependent role traditionally allocated to many people with disabilities. If they are deprived of access to employment as a major marker of adult status and, in addition, are unable to demonstrate their abilities in other fully adult roles, there is apparently no alternative but to take on the role of 'disabled person' with all its connotations.

People with disabilities, particularly where these are relatively severe, have been accorded less than full adult status and are generally regarded as incapable of taking on the adult role of employee:

> '... as long as I was in the protective custody of family life or college schedules and lived without exercising my rights as an adult citizen, the forces of society were kind and unruffling. It was after college, business school, and innumerable stretches as a volunteer worker on community projects, that I was often bogged down by the medieval prejudices and superstitions of the business world. Looking for a job was like standing before a firing squard. Employers were shocked that I had the gall to apply for a job.' (Young person with disabilities quoted in Henrick and Kriegel, 1961.)

Perhaps the shock felt by the employers was a response to a person with a disability trying to become a full adult and not amazement that such a person had the skills necessary for the job.

Conclusion

There are many aspects of adult status in our society. A range of these can be achieved through paid employment.

Lack of employment can make it difficult to gain access to full adult status, particularly when unemployment is not positively chosen as an alternative lifestyle.

Young people who are both disabled and unemployed face enormous barriers in the transition to active adult life. Unless we, as a society, are willing to accept the challenge of providing each individual with the support needed to gain and sustain employment we are guilty of denying access to what is generally regarded as full adult status.

Strategies and resources must be found by which young people with disabilities can not only become contributing members of society through employment, but also achieve a range of fully adult roles in society.

2. Current employment in the UK

Unemployment statistics are used to denote only those people who do not have paid work but are *actively* seeking it. This means that the number of people with disabilities who *would* wish to work if support were available remains hidden.

All young people seeking employment enter a particular job market. The state of that market and the factors which have operated in bringing about current trends have a fundamental effect on the range of options open to them.

Young people seeking employment in the UK today are faced with a very different employment world from that which awaited their parents at a similar age.

Unemployment reached a peak in the mid 1980s when, in the summer of 1986, the figure reached 3.133 million (Department of Employment figures) - over 11% of those people were defined as being within the employment market. Since that time the seasonally adjusted rate has fallen 32 times in succession and the cumulative fall to date has been 1.215 million (*Guardian*, 1989). This puts the *official* total of unemployed people at present at 1.918 million (Department of Employment, 13th March 1989), an unemployment rate of 6.9% - as compared with 4.8% in 1979.

However, a relatively small number of people are unemployed long-term as compared to the total number. Most individuals' experience of unemployment is of the lengthening gaps between work rather than of continuous spells of being unemployed (Daniel, 1981).

The current rate of unemployment is such, however, that there is a very real chance that a young person may not have a job or may be under pressure to stay in one job rather than explore a number of different ones. This limits the exploration of different vocational paths in a way that makes the early years of employment for a young person a very different experience from that of the 1960s. At that time Super *et al.* (1967) found that a significant number of young people spent some time changing career directions, and moving from job to job between the ages of 18 and 25. This is supported by Gibbons and Lohnes (1969): between a third and a half of the young people they studied were still moving from job to job and had not stabilized their working life by the age of 25. This exploration of different jobs before making a commitment would be much more risky today. What is more, a record of changing jobs could result in a young person being considered unreliable and unemployable. A young person's initial choice of job thus has far more significance. Preparation and training must support young people by attempting to help them *sample* a range of vocational

areas before actually committing themselves to real employment. Most early vocational education and training in the UK at present (Cooper, 1989, for an overview) aims to fulfil this need.

In the UK, unemployment is now less acute nationally than it was two or three years ago, but this mean figure conceals many pockets of high employment, both in certain geographical areas and amongst certain groups within the population; for example, amongst young people. A simple figure of jobs available can mask changes which have taken place in the type of jobs on offer. For example a laundry which provided 50 jobs may close and instead two estate agents, three specialist retail outlets for electronic goods, a restaurant and a solicitor's office may open in the same area. There will have been no statistical job loss but most of the ex-laundry employees may become unemployed because they cannot be recruited for the new jobs. New arrivals or commuters from another area fill them. This has implications both for geographical areas and for certain groups of job seekers. The current unemployment situation and the changes which have taken place over the past two or three decades are examined below in order to illustrate current trends in the world of work which will be encountered by young people entering, or already in, employment.

It is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the employment situation. There is considerable disagreement as to whether there has been such a fall in the number of registered unemployed people as the official figures indicate. Some commentators argue that the fall has been brought about, not by a growth in the number of jobs available, but by other factors. These include changing the ways in which the statistics are formulated, and the growth of training schemes such as the Youth Training Scheme and Employment Training. If people are taking part in these schemes, they are not registered as unemployed but neither do they have permanent jobs. It is not intended to explore this further here but the arguments are worth noting.

Whatever the increase in the actual number of jobs may have been in recent years, there can be no doubt that jobs themselves have changed and are changing. Unemployment is not caused by simple shrinkage in the number of available so that those seeking work outnumber the available posts. Massey and Meegan's (1982) analysis of the reasons for job losses in the two decades leading up to the early 1980s, is helpful in clarifying this.

They argue that jobs which have been created since then differ both in quantity and quality from employment opportunities previously available. They describe the process, which has resulted in a major shift in the number, and in the kind, of jobs which are available currently. They identify three main elements:

- rationalisation
- intensification
- investment and technical change

which are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

Rationalisation

What does it mean?

Job loss is linked to loss of output. Many manufacturing and construction industries do not, for example, need as large a work-force as 30 years ago. The decline began in the mid-1960s and by the mid-1970s manufacturing in the UK employed 1.3 million people fewer than ten years earlier, a decline of just over 15% (Brown and Sheriff, 1978).

Effect on the work-force

- Considerably fewer jobs are available in particular industries.
- There are very high levels of unemployment in areas where these and similar industries have been major employers.

Certain parts of the country, and indeed particular towns and cities, have been severely affected by rationalisation, and young people coming in to the job market in these areas, such as South Tyneside or Northen Ireland, are particularly disadvantaged as few alternatives to traditional sources of employment have been developed.

Intensification

What does it mean?

Fewer workers maintain the previous level of output without major changes to either the nature of the work or the scale of production.

Each worker has to achieve more output in a given amount of time. This can be achieved by:

- additional work aids;
- speeding up the process;
- changes in working practices;
- increased flexibility of the workforce;
- the payment of bonuses.

Effect on the work-force

Fast, efficient workers are needed who can maintain output, possibly across a range of activities. Fewer jobs are available for slower, less flexible workers who are efficient only in one activity or part of the process.

Investment and technical change

What does it mean?

Job losses occur as the result of significant investment, often related to changes in techniques of production. In 16 of the 31 industries studied by Massey and Meegan, job losses followed heavy capital investment. Unlike intensification where the worker is able to reduce the time devoted to the production activity, the activity itself is taken over by machinery or equipment.

Some industries' technical change was brought about either by the introduction of machinery or by replacing existing machinery with more sophisticated and extensive equipment. Some industries were influenced very considerably by the introduction of new technology which reached the UK and other industrialised countries at a time of severe recession (Benson and Lloyd, 1983).

Information technology was seen as a major threat to jobs and at the end of the 1970s it was believed that five million people in the UK might become unemployed during the 1980s as a direct result of the adoption of the new technology (Hines and Searle, 1979).

Effect on the work-force

There was an overestimate of the speed of change in technologically conservative Britain, but it is certain that the impact of microtechnology will continue to be very considerable.

The training and retraining of workers is a necessity. For this to be successful, higher levels of basic education, flexibility and transferable skills are needed than for many of the semi- or unskilled jobs which have now been replaced. Traditional jobs disappear; new and different ones are created.

Outcomes of these changes

These three elements operating within the employment market have together produced, and are still producing, changes in the requirements which many employers have of their work-force. There are young people who would have been able to find appropriate jobs 20 or 30 years ago but who lack the speed, flexibility, transferable skills or general education for the jobs which are on offer as a result of intensification or technical change.

Service industries

Service industries have not followed an identical path. During the 1960s and 1970s the decline in the work-force in service industries was slower, and in some areas, such as London and the South East, loss of jobs in manufacturing has been more than compensated for by gains in service sector jobs. Growth in this sector has also provided a counter balance to manufacturing and construction industry decline, although

in some areas there has been total, or almost total, loss of manufacturing jobs with no growth in service sector employment (Layard, 1986). However, nationally, service industries are likely to provide a significantly higher number of new opportunities than manufacturing industries.

The situation in the UK is not markedly dissimilar to other European countries, although the UK unemployment rate has been higher in the 1980s (OECD, 1985). In the USA, however, the pattern is, and has been, different. During the 1970s there was a rapid expansion in the number of jobs. This growth rate slowed in the early 1980s. From 1983 onward unemployment was reduced until in 1986 it was at the same level as in 1979 (Layard, 1986). The trend away from manufacturing to an increased number of jobs in the service sector has been similar. However, Rothschild (1981) notes that many service sector jobs offer low rates of pay per hour, fewer hours of work and less possibility of advancement than had been previously available.

Who is most affected by these trends?

Three groups of people are likely to be hardest hit by these changes:

- young people
- unskilled workers
- people with disabilities

Young people will need considerable experience in the work-place before they are able to work efficiently at speed and develop a range of flexible skills. Training can be carried out during the Youth Training Scheme but most young people will still be at a disadvantage compared with experienced workers. Many employers also feel that older workers will be more reliable and stable. This disadvantage is shown clearly in the statistics of unemployment, where the rate is much higher for young people than for older people. In 1985 (OPCS, 1985) male unemployment rates were 22.3%, 29.2% and 22.5% in the age groups under 18, 18-19 and 20-24 respectively, while those for men aged 25-54 and 55-59 years were 13.7% and 18.7%.

Semi- and unskilled workers and young people who would seek this kind of work can be disadvantaged by the changes.

In Britain in 1983, 84% of unemployed men were manual workers, half of them semi- or unskilled. Amongst these groups, unemployment rates were (OPCS, 1983):

- Non-manual	5%
- Semi-manual	12%
- Semi- and unskilled	23%

Ten or 15 years previously semi- and unskilled workers were about four times as likely to be unemployed as non-manual workers (Micklewright, 1983).

People with disabilities tend to be:

- less well educated;
- less well trained;
- slower because of their disability.

(OECD/CERI, 1985)

The OECD/CERI work referred to above points out that the low standards and expectations of special schools and the lack of effective teaching in mainstream schools are equally unsatisfactory, and both represent a failure to assist young people in their development and serve, instead, to limit their life chances.

They are less likely to be able to meet the demands of employers resulting from intensification and technological change. They are likely to be further disadvantaged by prejudice from employers.

Conclusions

Those young people who are not only disadvantaged by their lack of experience and personal maturity, but who also have a disability, are likely to face considerable difficulty in obtaining employment without individual support.

Those people who are young, disabled and likely to be seeking unskilled work, for example those with learning difficulties, will need intensive preparation and support if they are to gain and keep employment.

These conclusions are supported by Marshall (1978) who says that young people who are most likely to experience difficulty in securing a first job and who are most likely to be unemployed more often and for longer periods, and those who have most socio-economic disadvantages are: the poorly educated; the physically disabled; the mentally handicapped and young mothers.

Trends in the job market mean that potential employees are particularly in need of support from education and training to equip them to take on the available jobs, which may demand flexibility, transferable or technical skills, or may require the personal qualities and interpersonal skills needed for the service industries. Retraining will be necessary to equip people for periodic career change.

Youth unemployment is a major aspect of the overall picture. It particularly affects young people who are educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged, and, unless effective measures are taken to tackle their unemployment problems, they will become *permanently* dependent on benefits, and *permanently* deprived of a major marker of adult status and of active and equal participation in the mainstream of an industralised society.

It is vital that all young people have access to an educational and training curriculum that will genuinely equip them for adult life. It is particularly important that young people who are at a disadvantage have access to available support. Young people with disabilities may also need additional support because of the particular difficulties which they experience. These support needs are explored in the next chapter.

3. Additional support needs of young people with disabilities entering employment

Young people with disabilities encounter the same world of work and the same difficulties of transition to adulthood as their peers without disabilities. There can be no doubt that they also face additional difficulties. Disability has, potentially, a profound effect on transition into a working adult life.

In 1977 a survey conducted by the National Children's Bureau identified an unemployment rate of 19.1% amongst disabled school-leavers, compared with 4.4% amongst school-leavers generally. With the rise in the unemployment rate described in Chapter 2, such a survey today would produce a higher figure. There is a need for another exercise to update information on school-leavers with disabilities.

As chapter 2 made clear, the official unemployment rate is also affected by the fact that, to be included, an individual has to be both without a job *and* seeking work. Many severely disabled young people are not, therefore, included because they are considered to be outside the employment market by virtue of their disability. Since they are not seen as job-seekers, they are not included in the unemployment statistics, even though they are without paid employment. The issue of whether all people with disabilities are potential employees or not, is addressed in Chapter 4.

Additional difficulties

The NACEDP Working Party (1986) identified seven areas of difficulty which young people with disabilities have to face over and above the difficulties faced in transition by their peers. These were:

i) At the end of compulsory schooling, some young people are less well equipped than their able-bodied peers with the basic vocational and technical skills needed to enter the labour market.

ii) Young people with disabilities tend to be less mature and their social skills less developed than many of their non-disabled peers.

iii) Before they can settle in employment, many young people with disabilities need organised support from social and medical services.

iv) Some young people have to overcome physical barriers to employment. This may include transport to and from work as well as access to and within the work place.

v) Some young disabled people have to overcome internal and external psychological barriers to employment.

vi) There is a clear lack of understanding about disabled people

amongst many of those providing vocational education and training, and amongst employers and their employees.

vii) Some young people were thought to be capable of working only in sheltered employment conditions. There was a shortage of such provision.

This last point is contentious. The issues involved are examined in Chapter 4.

Additional needs for support

Because of these extra difficulties, young people with disabilities need additional support in preparing for employment.

Items (i) and (ii) above need to be considered carefully by:

- schools;
- colleges of further education;
- Youth Training Schemes;
- specialist agencies which have a role in preparing young people with disabilites for employment, both before and during their transition into adult life.

The implications of the NACEDP report for vocational education and training

The findings of NACEDP have considerable implications for the curriculum offered by both programmes for school leavers, and provision in further education, which are designed for, or include, young people with disabilites.

The curriculum, both in its content and its process, should equip young people with disabilites with social, vocational and technical skills. These would enable them to compete on more equal terms with their peers. This is particularly important for young people who do not have cognitive difficulties, when abilities may be unrealised if access is only to a restricted curriculum. In *Handicapped Youth at Work* (OECD/CERI, 1985) it appears that the needs of the young people interviewed were no better met either by segregated or integrated education. Both kinds of educational provision, therefore, need to examine their present offer.

Special schools need to extend their curricula and avoid over-protection. Other 'mainstream' schools need to provide more effective support which will enable young people with disabilities to gain more from the curriculum on offer.

The curriculum for transition

The pre-vocational education and training of young people with disabilities will take place, whether in school, college or Youth Training Scheme, in one of the following ways.

- ***Through the specially designed curriculum***

This is most appropriate for young people with a cognitive impairment or those with complex disabilites.

- *Through access to the mainstream curriculum*

  Special schools, college courses or YTS, which provide access to all or parts of the mainstream curriculum on their own site or within consortium arrangements, enable young people to have access to the same curriculum offer as their peers, e.g. a college for the blind offering BTEC, or a CPVE programme for students with learning difficulties which takes place in a mainstream college

- *Within mainstream provision*

  Young people are prepared for work in a range of supported mainstream settings.

The empowering curriculum

However a young person is prepared for employment, and whatever the content of the programme, the curriculum must:

- empower the students;
- give them the skills to make choices and decisions;
- provide them with the social skills which will be of genuine benefit to them in an unsegregated adult setting such as employment;
- provide the sorts of experiences that trigger and support adolescent transition. Other young people will gain these experiences outside the curriculum but a young person with disabilities may need the support of school or college. These experiences will include:
  - — the opportunity for decision-making;
  - — appropriate risk taking;
  - — self-advocacy;
  - — freedom for adolescent behaviour;
  - — other appropriate activities.

  Rather than handicapping the young person, the curriculum will then serve to empower her or him.

What must be avoided

Where a specially designed curriculum is delivered, it can sometimes become divorced from the realities of the outside world because of the degree of specialisation necessary.

Special schools and specially designed courses in further education need to review their offer to ensure that it is in line with mainstream provision.

Segregated provision can produce a watered-down or divergent alternative delivered by teachers who often have no contact with their mainstream colleagues and no access to the pre-service and in-service training provided for those involved in the delivery of pre-vocational education.

Support can be managed so ineffectively that it can handicap the young people in their development of autonomy and instrumentality. A classroom assistant, for example, provided to help young blind people manage their environment may effectively divorce them from that peer group and maintain their dependence on an adult long after this has ceased to be appropriate.

The assumption must be challenged that young people with disabilities have had the same life experiences as their non-disabled peers. They may have had little or no opportunity for autonomy outside school or college and been doubly disadvantaged both by the nature of their impairment and by the handicapping affects of society's expectations.

The benefits of the empowering curriculum

If an empowering curriculum were delivered by schools, colleges and Youth Training Schemes, young people with disabilities would be less disadvantaged in their transition to employment. They would be better equipped with the basic vocational and technical skills needed to enter the labour market, more mature, and have better social skills. Furthermore, they would be better fitted to compete with their non-disabled peers.

A NACEDP conclusion - that some young disabled people have to overcome internal psychological barriers to employment - should also be addressed through the empowering curriculum. It is emphasised in *Obstacles to Work for All* (OECD/CERI, 1983) that, unless the barriers to early expectations of full adult status are challenged, young people with disabilities may be cocooned by their families and by caring services. They may be reluctant to venture into the unfamiliar environment of work and adult status. This would, of course, severely handicap young people in developing a positive determination to seek and sustain employment. It may be easier and feel safer to remain dependent.

The empowering curriculum should not be seen as relevant only to education. It is vital that programmes delivered by the Training Agency also recognise these issues. Schemes should acknowledge that young people with disabilities may need particular support in developing an adult worker identity.

The empowering curriculum as an expanded common core

Schools, FE programmes, Employment Training and Youth Training Schemes need to expand their core educational or training curriculum for young people with disabilities so that their additional difficulties in gaining employment are addressed directly. This recommendation is set out fully in Chapter 6.

Inter-agency collaboration

The case for organised support made in the NACEDP document also

needs to be given careful consideration. There is an undoubted need for inter-agency collaboration in the support of young people with disabilities into employment and beyond. While children and young people are in school, the education service takes on a major co-ordinating role. The school, particularly the special school, is the point of delivery for a range of services provided by a number of different agencies; for example: medical and dental care; assessment for, and fitting of, aids and appliances; social work support; support and contact from voluntary organisations; all came to children and their families via the school.

Co-ordination of services

Services are delivered in a co-ordinated and supportive way to meet a whole range of needs. At present there is no such co-ordinating service for multi-agency co-operation and support in the post-school phase, although the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act, 1986, moves department of social services into a version of this role, particularly in respect of young people leaving school. However, although the Act enables a representative to be appointed by disabled people, (or by the Local Authority on their behalf if they are deemed as being unable to make such an appointment), the appointee is a lay person who represents the views , wishes and rights of the disabled person, not a professional person with a duty to provide information and support to young disabled people.

Representatives have no part in the process of enabling young people to make the transition to active adult status. Nor do they have a role in supporting young people in co-ordinating multi-agency services on their own behalf.

A recommendation for a 'named person' who would have a professional role in providing support for young people in transition is set out in Chapter 6.

Barriers to employment

Lack of information

A further curriculum issue is the provision of training for young people in self-advocacy skills. They also need to be taught about what is available to them and how to access it. However, it is unlikely that many young people would have the self-assurance and the range of knowledge and skills to act as fully independent self-advocates while still in their teens or early 20s. This would be true even if the curriculum issues described above were being fully addressed.

There is here an additional argument for the existence of a 'named person', a professional person whose remit it is to support the transition of a young disabled person. Part of this role would consist of enabling young people to undertake more and more responsibilty for all areas of their own life, to whatever degree this may be possible. This support would be combined with the delivery of an educational

training curriculum which properly addressed the skills, concepts and process of transition. The named person role would involve a planned phasing out of the need for its existence in the lives of most young people with disabilites. However, the support could be long-term in the case of young people with severe intellectual disabilites or those with complex and multiple needs.

Physical barriers

The Training Agency provides aids, appliances and equipment to young disabled workers as well as improving access to and within the work place. There are schemes in operation in many parts of the country which either facilitate assessment, driving instruction and adaptation of cars (Motability), or provide access to transport services, e.g. Dial-a-Ride; Community Transport. There are still, however, physical barriers to employment for some young disabled people, the continuation of which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Discrimination as a barrier

A further area of difficulty, which handicaps young people with disabilities in their search for employment, is the discrimination of employers and of fellow employees. Most of those interviewed during this study did not feel that equal opportunities policies made any difference. Some people, however, felt that these policies were a vital and valuable move towards challenging discrimination.

Three ways of tackling this major difficulty are suggested here. They focus particularly on issues of curriculum, empowerment and multi-agency collaboration. They are:

- training for employers
- disability awareness
- self-advocacy training

Challenging discrimination

Training for employers

There is a need for awareness-raising concerning the employment potential of people with disabilities to be a standard component in business, management and personnel training courses at all levels. This would familiarise those involved in employment with the nature of physical sensory, psychiatric and intellectual disabilities. It would give them some understanding of the support needed to enable workers to make a full contribution at all levels of employment.

The NCVQ video *Recognising Ability* is a good example of a way in which the competence of people with disabilities can be brought to the attention of employers.

Disability awareness

Elements of disabilty awareness need to be included within the educational and training curricula of all young people, together with some work alongside their peers who have a disability. Young people would be aware then that they may well work alongside a colleague with a disability, manage such a worker, or be managed by a more senior worker with a disability.

Self-advocacy training

Any curriculum offered to young people with disabilities must include the development of self-advocacy skills or training in skills which would enable them to use an advocate. Young people, themselves, would then be better able to challenge lack of understanding and prejudice in an appropriate way. The curriculum should also prepare young people to face the ignorance and prejudice they are likely to encounter in the world of work. This is particularly important for those who have been educated in special schools, especially boarding schools, where the whole environment may have been tailored to their needs (see Michael's comments in Chapter 5). Staff and families understand, and are knowledgeable about, particular disabilities and their effects, so young people may be very unused to explaining these to other people.

Conclusion

Young people with disabilities face additional barriers to employment to their non-disabled peers. These may be surmounted by:

- the empowering curriculum;
- inter-agency collaboration;
- co-ordination of services;
- access to information;
- removing physical barriers;
- challenging discrimination;
- the support of a named person.

Ways of addressing the additional barriers to employment, which young people with disabilities face, are set out in the recommendations in Chapter 6.

The next chapter looks closely at the experiences of young people and their employers.

4. Perceptions of employability

For this study, employers were interviewed about their experiences of employing workers with a disability. Representatives of preparation and placement agencies were also interviewed in order to compare their concepts of employment competence with those of the employers themselves. (See Appendix B for the range of those interviewed.)

The perceptions of people with disabilities, which were gathered at the same time, are included in this section to demonstrate the high level of consensus evident during the interviews. Chapter 5, however, gives their own accounts of their experiences in much greater detail.

During the course of the interviews it became clear that a general notion of employability exists, and that there was a consensus about the general requirements which a young person needs to meet in order to be employable.

This generally agreed 'Employability Package' is set out below.

In order to be employable it is thought that a young person should be:

- reliable;
- conscientious;
- responsible;
- motivated to work;
- able to relate to colleagues;
- able to get to and from work;
- able to understand and carry out instructions;
- acceptable in terms of personal hygiene and self-presentation;
- acceptable in terms of social behaviour;
- able to respond pleasantly and co-operatively;
- able to survive in the world of work;
- able to work without constant supervision;
- able to take the initiative;
- able to keep work separate from other aspects of their life;
- have an appropriate degree of personal autonomy.

Reliability

Everyone interviewed considered reliability, in the sense of

timekeeping, regular attendance and dependability, to be vital in employment.

It was also seen as an important factor in preparation for employment and agencies which did not require it were viewed as providing poor training. Two employers gave their perspective:

> 'We have had young people we couldn't keep because of their inability to understand basic job requirements of regular attendance and timekeeping.'

> 'We once had a school-based work-experience scheme which left it to individuals to turn up or not and provided them with no learning structure.'

Conscientiousness

This was rated as more important than speed by most employers. For example:

> 'I look for steadiness rather than speed. Keeping going is more important than speed of work.'

There is undoubtedly, however, a degree of slowness in performing tasks which is unacceptable. Employees were required who:

- had a conscientious attitude;
- understood the personal responsibilities involved in contractual employment;
- had the ability to concentrate for long enough to produce useful work.

Responsibility towards a job

There was general agreement that some young people failed to sustain employment because they did not have a real commitment to the work and to their colleagues. This apparent lack of responsibility was often described as immaturity.

Motivation to work

> 'If someone is motivated to work there is nothing else that cannot be surmounted. If a young person is not motivated to work, no matter how much support is provided, he/she will fail.'
>
> (Worker on a specially designed YTS)

> 'She didn't want to get on with the work for more than about ten minutes. She would go into the foyer and make long telephone calls to her friend. She didn't care whether the sandwiches were done or not. In the second week they sacked her.'
>
> Pathway Employment officer)

Chapter 6 shows that the motivation to work of some young people has obviously helped them to succeed, sometimes against great odds.

Ability to relate to colleagues

An ability not to antagonise and upset workmates was seen as important by employers. This positive aspect of relating to colleagues was emphasised by preparation and placement agencies and by young people themselves. It was extended in some instances to include getting along with other employees, employers and supervisors, clients and customers.

'To keep a job you must be able to get on with the people you're working with', said a young man with partial sight and epilepsy. Others interviewed agreed with him.

Ability to get to and from work

Many young people are unable to get a job because they cannot travel independently or organise a means of getting to work. Five specialist careers officers and four Pathway Employment officers, for example, listed the ability to travel to work as being a crucial factor in determining employability.

Ability to understand and carry out instructions

The ability to do the job and to understand and carry out instructions, at whatever level the job demands, was the most frequently identified competence for employment. Some employers have gone to considerable trouble to find ways of enabling employees, who were unable to read, to follow instructions in pictures or photographs.

Acceptable hygiene and appearance

Poor personal hygiene may make a young person almost impossible to place. If employment is gained, poor basic hygiene can mean losing the job. Young people with learning difficulties and those with a visual impairment may need particular training and support in maintaining an appropriate appearance.

Appropriate social behaviour

Acceptable social behaviour varies to some extent from work place to work place, and it is important that young people can adapt their behaviour accordingly. Behaviour which is acceptable and unremarkable in a segregated setting, such as an Adult Training Centre, may prove to be a barrier to employment.

A 'pleasant' manner

This is obviously a contentious issue but it was frequently mentioned by the full range of those interviewed. Young people are thought to be more likely to succeed in employment if they have a 'pleasant' personality and are easy to get along with.

'Friendliness', 'willingness to please', 'enthusiasm', and a 'good, happy

personality', were mentioned by young people themselves as important factors in getting and keeping a job.

Ability to survive in the world of work

Some resilience and lack of vulnerability is considered to be essential if a young person is going to remain in employment, particularly the kind of resilience which enables the young people to continue in the face of setbacks. Special schools and specialised adult provision are seen to face difficulties in preparing young people for realities of the harsher outside world.

> 'A young man with a visual impairment filled the salt and pepper pots up wrongly in the luncheon club where he was working. When he was asked to empty and refill them he walked out and would not return to work.'
>
> (Employer)

Ability to work without total supervision

This was considered to be important but employers were willing to be flexible and supportive in the early days of employment.

> 'I would like them to have some initiative, but it wouldn't matter if they weren't sure of themselves to start with.'
>
> (Employer)

Ability to take the initiative

The amount of initiative required obviously varies from job to job, but even for simple repetitive tasks it was seen that some positive response to an unusual occurence would be necessary.

> 'Employers want someone who can look around and see what needs to be done - or tell somebody if things are going wrong.'
>
> (Specialist Careers Officer)

Ability to keep work separate from other aspects of life

Some young people with disabilities failed in employment because other aspects of their lives, which are usually kept separate, spilled over into their work environment. They seemed not to have learned to take on different roles for different areas of their lives. For example, a young woman with learning difficulties would not do any work because she was upset about quarrels with her boyfriend. Although the personnel manager was initially sympathetic, she was told that she must get on with the job. When she was not able to do this she was eventually given verbal and written warnings and finally lost her job.

Personal autonomy

Many of the comments made by the people interviewed centred on concepts of maturity, independence and an appropriate level of personal autonomy for young people entering employment.

A majority of the preparation agencies see the development of autonomy as central to their work.

This shared perception of the meaning of employability is the basis for an 'employability curriculum' which enables young people to develop the commonly agreed competence that they will be expected to demonstrate. TVEI and CPVE offer routes to competence for some young people. Youth Training Schemes aim to provide an extension of the 'Employability Package' in a work setting which acts as bridge between education and employment. It is vital that young people with disabilities have access to these initiatives as well as to additional ways of addressing their difficulties.

Barriers to employment

In response to questions about the factors which make it difficult for young people with disabilities to get a job, replies fell into two major categories:

- those which related to young people themselves;
- those which related to external factors.

Young people who do not have the 'Employability Package'

This was seen as a major barrier to employment. Four examples of responses are given here:

> 'Principally, lack of understanding about the world of work and employment. Many employers are considerate and prepared to make allowances, but faced with rebellious and sullen attitudes by young people who do not appreciate that there may be changes of priority in the work being performed, for example, and become rigid and resort to job descriptions, may decide to "let them go".'
>
> (Manager, Rehabilitation Unit)

> 'Employees' lack of confidence. Lack of social awareness. Mobility fears.'
>
> (Young woman who is totally blind)

> 'Young people sometimes don't understand what work is all about. They don't understand why punctuality and getting on with the job are important.'
>
> (Employer)

> 'Lack of independence; lack of ability to understand what's expected. Behavioural problems or lack of dependability.'
>
> (Specialist Careers Officer)

Where young people do not have the 'Employability Package', their difficulties may not have been addressed sufficiently by the preparation process. Some of them may need to leave work and be more effectively prepared; others will need support from employers in achieving the required competences. YTS offers appropriate preparation for work for many learners but is not able to offer support *into* employment when it

is often most needed. Such sustained support could be given by the 'named person' (see Chapter 3).

External barriers to employment

Even though some young people have the 'Employability Package', they are still unable to get jobs. Why is this? The range of responses to questions about difficulties in getting to work provides some of the answers.

> 'Our procedure for advertising most vacancies is carried out internally first so few disabled people hear of them. We have inaccessible buildings at the workplace. Recruiters are unaware of the potential of people with disabilities.'
>
> (Employer)

> 'Job changes: for example, assistant warehouse workers who have to be able to assist with clerical duties or a labourer who must also be able to drive. The running of two jobs together so that a person with a disability can't do both.'
>
> (Manager, specialist YTS)

> 'The factors which make employment for handicapped people difficult are biased opinions by some able-bodied people; they think that a handicap slows down progress.'
>
> (Young man with visual impairment)

> 'People won't employ them because of prejudice. That is the main cause of difficulty. Employers assume they can't do the work. There is lack of tools that they can use.'
>
> (Young man with partial sight and epilepsy)

None of those interviewed mentioned the work legislation relating to the employment of people with disabilities, or a need for anti-discrimination legislation in line with that concerned with race and gender. The lack of such equal opportunities law nevertheless is obviously a factor. However, equal opportunities policies were mentioned positively by some people with disabilities.

Support in gaining employment

Many of those interviewed believed that support in preparing for employment is particularly important and could quote examples of good supportive services. These include:

- a preparation agency which offers very effective office skills training to people with disabilities;
- YTS programmes which are specially designed and have good policy plus high standards;
- specially designed FE programmes;
- schools, FE courses and YTS programmes which offer independence training, mobility skills, personal hygiene advice and work experience.

Valued examples of what the services delivered were:

- good preparation for interviews;
- motivation of young people for employment;
- good practical preparation, including life skills;
- development of a young person's autonomy;
- not making inappropriate allowances;
- a combination of specific skills and generalised work skills;
- travel training for those who need it;
- helping young people cope for themselves;
- taking a young person for interview: making sure that they understand what is expected. Talking to key employees or training officers to prepare them for any difficulties;
- helping young people to cope for themselves.

Barriers to gaining employment

Poor preparation was identified mainly as service provision which had not allowed the young person to develop the attributes and skills needed for employment. Lack of awareness on the part of some preparation agencies as to the realities of employment was also commented on. Examples were:

- preparation agencies which have overestimated the abilities of a young person and the level of preparation they have reached;
- very basic training programmes at Adult Training Centres following which the clients are expected to integrate into employment with minimal support;
- institutionalisation within work preparation services which continue doing what they have always done regardless of changes in employment and employers' needs;
- schools which concentrate on academic learning and ignore the social skills needed. Others are caring institutions where overprotection may inhibit the young person's development;
- inaccessible information on young people or the nature of their disability and its implications in the workforce.

Support in sustaining employment

Once employment has been obtained, further support mechanisms are necessary to enable young people with disabilities to sustain employment. Support can be made available through employers and by outside agencies.

Structured support

Employer with well-developed support structure

Some employers have well-developed structures for supporting young employees. The assistant industrial relations officer of a national service industry responded as follows, when asked about the support available:

> 'The same support is available as is offered to all employees from within the organisation whilst they are at work, for example via the Welfare Department, their supervisor, Trade Unions, the Personnel Department.
>
> Within the Personnel Department, two people are designated as having responsibility for people with disabilities. They can become involved in offering help and advice with individual cases in an informal way.
>
> Once the disabled person has begun employment, there seems to be little structured support from outside agencies. However, informal support is always available from outside agencies, e.g. voluntary organisation, DROs, careers officers and we maintain contact in case this is needed.'

This officer could name people with disabilities within the organisation and she had a clear knowledge of the support made available to them.

As an employer she wanted greater access to specialist advice about these people's disabilities and their implications for employment, and aids and adaptations that may assist them. She saw her own company as being prepared to look at people's abilities. John (see Chapter 5) is an employee who has received support within this organisation.

Local contacts - understanding disability

Other employers offer support in different, less structured ways, both internally and with the use of external contacts.

One employer provided a service for children with disabilities and had a wide range of contacts with both statutory and voluntary organisations concerned with disability. He used these contacts to support young people with disabilities on work-experience placements and in permanent employment.

This organisation had a particularly good understanding of disability and could provide support which would be difficult to find outside a specialist employment setting. They had contacted a local school and offered work-experience placements to young people who were profoundly prelingually deaf, and whose main means of communication was British Sign Language. This offer was possible because of the signing ability of those operating the service.

They also had good contacts with a specialist careers officer who made herself available for the support of the employers and the employees after placement.

This employer had employed both deaf and partially hearing employees in the past. A current employee was a young woman who has significant learning difficulties in some specific areas because of brain damage at birth. She is currently at college studying for GCSE examinations and works part-time in the office. This young woman needs a particularly supportive training style because of her difficulty in learning and her lack of self-confidence. Her employer offers a high level of support in employment to young people with disabilities.

This organisation has been used as a stepping stone in developing a career in the past, in particular by a young partially hearing woman who gained both experience of work and confidence in her own employability, before moving on. The team was able to help her prepare her curriculum vitae, polish up her interview technique and give her next employer information on such matters as the adaptation of telephones. They provided a very extensive support system for her in her transition from one job to another.

This employer was not typical of employers in general, but was not unique. Employers such as this, for example in voluntary organisations, can often make a valuable contribution by providing highly supportive access to employment. Their contribution may often be overlooked.

Personal commitment

In another interview a senior manager had a particular personal commitment to enabling people with disabilities to work for her firm. She had developed many contacts and found ways of enabling a number of people to take up permanent employment. This firm's activities are described more fully in Chapter 5.

Three employers indicated that the reception of an application for employment from a young person with a disability may rest with the individual commitment of one person in that firm or organisation. In a relatively small firm this works extremely well. In some very large organisations the person who would consider the applicants most supportively has no official responsibility for employees with disabilities. Enquiries and applications would therefore not be passed on automatically and chance plays a large part in deciding whether an applicant reaches the right committed, sympathetic person. Personal commitment is vital, but some more formal structure would have ensured that chance did not play quite such a major part in the employment of individual young people. Young people with disabilities have the right to expect that their access to employment does not rest on good will alone.

A word of warning

Even the most supportive employers described situations where they felt that a young person had failed because of an over-statement of their abilities by a preparation or placement agency. Some had not succeeded because of lack of information about aspects of their disability which

were then neither expected nor prepared for. The absence of the 'Employability Package' was cited as another major cause of job loss.

Outside agencies

Support is sometimes available from outside agencies. For example, the Pathway Service, run by MENCAP, places in employment, and supports, people with learning difficulties and seeks to manage the issues raised above by providing a whole process of introduction and support to clients and employers. Four Pathway Officers were interviewed for this project.

Initially the Pathway Empoyment Officer considers whether a person who wishes to work has enough of the 'Employability Package' to make employment now a realistic possibility.

If this is not the case, the young person may be helped by, for example, a programme in further education, participation in a Youth Training Scheme, a particular programme at a Day Centre or a period at a Rehabilitation Centre. If the clients have enough of the 'Employability Package', they participate in drawing up a picture of the kind of employment which they would wish to undertake and in which they are likely to succeed.

The Pathway Employment Officer (PEO) utilises a network of employer contacts or extends it as necessary, in order to find an employer who is prepared to give the young person a chance to work. The employer is then helped to prepare the conditions in which the young person is most likely to succeed. A job may, for example, be moulded to suit a particular person by taking parts of existing tasks to provide a job that offers suitable challenges. Sometimes a small adjustment to existing work practice may make all the difference to the ability of a person with learning difficulties to perform it.

The PEO then accompanies the prospective employee to a pre-arranged, non-competitive interview where the employer can make the final decision.

If the interview is successful the new worker will be accompanied to work on the first day and introduced to work-mates by the PEO. Often a 'foster worker' will have been selected from within the work-force to train and support the Pathway recruit. A small gratuity is available to this worker, through the Service, in acknowledgement of this undertaking.

Throughout an initial three-month period, during which the employer may be reimbursed for the Pathway employee's wages, the PEO provides monitoring and support. By the end of this time, when the Pathway employee is paid the same rate for the job as other workers by the employer themselves, support can be decreased.

The PEO is always available and may be contacted either by the employer or by the employee. In addition the PEO may work with other staff and with families and may involve a range of other agencies in providing a network of support for other aspects of the person's life outside employment.

This comprehensive support service is available, sadly, in only about 30 different areas of the country and may be used only by those people with learning difficulties who live within that particular area for which the service has been purchased. This means that luck - the luck involved in living in a particular area - still plays a major part in the opportunities available to a young person.

Wansbrough and Cooper (1980) state that people who are recovering from psychiatric illness and their employers are in particular need of support:

> 'The continuing support of the hospital seems to influence appreciably the attitudes of employers who may be persuaded to offer a chance to newcomers. The impression remains that small employers appreciate and even demand ongoing support, perceiving that they do not know enough to be left on their own!'

There are many examples of support services which are available to young people with disabilities. Representatives who were interviewed as part of this study are listed in Appendix B.

Support by parents

A major issue, which was raised in different ways in the inteviews, was the role of parents in the working life of their son or daughter and how they can or should support an adult child who is employed.

The manager of a specially designed Youth Training Scheme gave 'support from the family and a commitment by them to the concept of work' as the major factor in the success or failure of a young person in employment.

One employer listed three sources of support which were provided to a young person in connection with a sheltered placement:

- disablement resettlement officer
- sponsoring organisation
- the person's family

A supervisor from this firm liaises with a young person's family if difficulty occurs.

Another employer can contact parents if there are matters to be sorted out. She noted that the employees with disabilities all live with their parents, even the older ones who were not part of our discussion, and expressed concern that their support systems would break down when the parents died.

A Pathway officer mentioned that, in spite of the supportive service he was known to provide, he was sometimes bypassed by employers in favour of parents, particularly if a problem from outside work was brought into the workplace or was affecting output.

An employment service listed the attitudes of parents, along with those of employers and specialist professionals, as being a major barrier to employment for young people with disabilities.

Parents are seen to be a powerful influence on the employment potential of a young person with a disability. They are also seen as a major source of support to employers and employees, and undoubtedly contribute to the resolution of difficulties.

This is, however, a major issue in the transition of young people with disabilities to adult life. If young people are to achieve the transition to adult status described in Chapter 1 they must take on responsibility for their own lives. 'During this transition phase, young people in general must outgrow their childhood dependency on their parents in order to achieve stature as adults.' (Jersild *et al.*, 1978)

This cannot be achieved either, if parents are used as a channel of communication, control and support by employers or if they are called upon to sort out difficulties in the life of their adult son or daughter as they did when he or she was a child.

Parents undoubtedly have a role in the lives of their adolescent or adult sons and daughters. They have a different and increased role if the son or daughter has a disability and lives in the parental home during their adult life. They often have to continue to provide a range of support because nothing else is available.

Services are needed which will enable parents to feel that they do not have to provide intensive support for their sons and daughters with disabilities as they make the transition to adulthood.

Definitions of employability

The majority of those interviewed had a very clear concept of employability as defined by the 'Employability Package' (Chapter 2). People who do have most of the elements of the Employability Package are not seen as suitable for employment.

Potential employees who have most of the competences of the Package, but whose speed of work was too slow for employing them to be financially viable for the employer, could be supported by the Sheltered Placement Scheme.

People with severe disabilities were usually thought to be capable only of being employed in sheltered, segregated settings where they would receive appropriate support and fewer demands would be made on them.

Individuals with very severe disabilities were considered to be outside the employment market altogether.

People with disabilities are seen as belonging to one of the following groups regarding employment:

- those who can work in an open setting;
- those who need a sheltered setting;
- those who are unable to work.

Different individuals defined different boundaries between the three groups and there would undoubtedly be major differences of opinion about where some young people should be most appropriately placed.

This definition of employability is reinforced and formalised in the recommendations of the Tomlinson Committee of 1943, which were enacted in the 1944 Disabled Persons (Employment) Act.

In the Act, and the regulations associated with it, people with disabilities were divided into these same three groups. This perception of different groups having differing needs determined the services which are offered and legitimised the notion of 'diversionary activity' as being appropriate for a group of people who are considered to be outside the labour market.

Services today are still largely based on these three catagories:

- those people who are capable of open employment are served, for example, by disablement resettlement officers, specialists and careers officers, Youth Training Schemes, Employment Training and by voluntary agency services such as Pathway Employment service. Services provide vocational education and training, access to information about available job opportunities, support with application and interview, and in some cases extended support within employment;
- those people capable of benefiting from sheltered employment are served by the Sheltered Placement Scheme which allows them to work in an open setting while freeing them from the pressure of a required work speed. Sheltered settings, such as Remploy (See *Current Initiatives 3*) and social services-funded sheltered workshops are also available. The voluntary sector, for example, the Spastics Society and Sense, make major provisions of sheltered settings for their particular client groups;
- for those who need diversionary activities, day centres are provided, either by social services departments or district health authorities. Some centres take on a role of providing vocational training for some of their clients. Many provide learning opportunities and leisure activities.

Extending the notion of employability

Three agencies who took part in this project disagree fundamentally with the definitions. They argue that *everyone*, however severe and complex their disabilities may be, can be enabled to work. They subscribe to a philosophy which is based on the meeting of support needs, rather than any range of abilities, skills or concepts which an individual may have. The 'Employability Package' is thus topped up by the provision of support. Support provides whatever the individual lacks.

> 'We require no basic competences. We make no assumptions about the time needed to learn the job. Our emphasis is on the client's needs and we are totally client based. Therefore, whatever needs a client has could potentially be met in an employment setting.'
>
> (Placement and Support Agency)

In this model of supported employment the time spent at work by each client can range from one or two hours per week to full time (35-40

hours per week). Whatever the employee needs in order to sustain their work is provided and this can include:

- systematic instruction;
- transport;
- travel escort;
- personal care;
- constant supervision;
- prompts;
- structured training;
- aids and appliances;
- specialised equipment.

Support is gradually withdrawn as competence develops. The support worker generates a support network which consists of other employees and other professionals, such as social workers or members of a community mental handicap team. The specialist team may also be included.

Two of the services based on this model are provided solely for people with learning difficulties (mental handicap) as a primary disability, although they may have one or more other disabilities as well. The other provides services across the full range of disabilities.

The basic concepts underpinning this model of service are set out in *An Ordinary Working Life* (Kings Fund, 1984). It challenges the notions set out in 'Obstacle To Work For All' in *The Education of the Handicapped Adolescents* (OECD/CERI, 1983).

This way of working provides the most optimistic way forward into employment for people with disabilities but further work still needs to be carried out on implications for employees who are supported. For example:

- Does this kind of service meet their needs?
- Is autonomy impaired by extensive support?
- Do the services provide what they say they provide?

Their employers and colleagues could be asked:

- Is this a method of recruiting workers which they would be prepared to use?
- Is it an issue that the quality and quantity of work produced may depend on the 'supporter' who is not an employee of the company?
- Can the 'supporter' be made accountable for excessive waste or customer dissatisfaction caused by the 'supported employee'?

If this kind of support could be provided at the end of high-quality pre-vocational education and training, young people with disabilities would have the best possible chance of gaining and sustaining employment. Available resources would also be used more effectively.

Conclusion

The response s to the questionnaires for this study showed a consensus of opinion with the NACEPD report. The additional difficulties identified in the report in the areas of:

- basic vocational and technical skills;
- maturity and autonomy;
- lack of co-ordinated support;
- transport;
- attitudes;

are clearly issues for preparation and placement agencies, employers and young workers.

5. Individual views of employment

In this part of the study people with disabilites describe their individual experiences of employment. Some of those interviewed cannot be defined as young, but all are at a point of transition towards a more active adult life. They were asked particularly about the kind of support they wish, or would have wished, to receive. This section also describes the employment context or setting for each person. In some cases, schemes are particularly for people with disabilities.

John

Supportive employer and Sheltered Placement Scheme

John has a significant learning difficulty caused by Down's Syndrome. His family provides considerable support that enables him to remain in employment.

His employer is a national service industry with a good record in employing and supporting people with disabilites.

He was assessed as suitable for the Sheltered Placement Scheme when he was 18 years old.

This is a model of support which provides a 'sheltered' placement in open employment. People with disabilities are therefore employed in ordinary workplaces alongside non-disabled fellow workers.

The Sheltered Placement Scheme

This scheme needs:

- *A sponsor* who is:
  - the disabled person's legal employer;
  - responsible for paying wages, National Insurance and managing tax;
  - responsible for paying a proportion of the disabled person's wage which is then reclaimed from the Training Agency;
  - responsible for providing some support and supervision.
- *A host* who:
  - provides employment alongside other employees;
  - pays for a proportion of the disabled person's wage based on the employee's assessed abilities and speed.

- *A person who wishes to work* and is:
  - registered as disabled;
  - unlikely in the forseeable future to be capable of obtaining and keeping a job on their own merits in ordinary employment;
  - capable of performing between 30% and 70% of the work of a typical employee doing the same job.

In John's case, he is assessed as being able to produce 50% of the output usually required. The host pays 50% of the wages. This proportion is, of course, agreed by both sponsor and host and may be renegotiated at any time. John receives the same wage as his fellow workers.

His employer described how John was initially placed in the employer's head office but this was not successful because his behaviour was considered immature. John found it difficult to carry out his work without considerable supervision and he resented being corrected or having to repeat work to get it right. He was transferred to a large branch office where he experienced similar difficulties, but it was acknowledged that in spite of this, John had the abilities to make a significant enough contribution to remain in employment. He was sufficiently motivated to make the effort involved in supporting him worthwhile.

The following people then worked together to support John:

- the Disablement Resettlement Officer who had found him the job;
- the course tutor from the specially designed college programme that he had previously attended;
- his supervisor at work;
- his parents, who are crucial in his support system.

Together they worked with John so that the right situation was developed for him. He now has his own clearly defined tasks in the Post Room which he fully understands. He works alongside other members of staff and is popular with other workers both within his section and more generally.

Although John's difficulties have been resolved successfully, his employers feel that this is due, even in their supportive systems, to his family and to the fact that he is part of the Sheltered Placement Scheme. Both he and his employers receive support from a representative of the sponsor whose role is to help sort out work difficulties.

His employer commented that there is no single such referral point for a young person with a disabilty if they are in open employment. The Sheltered Placement Scheme meant that a contact was there for John.

John says:

> 'I like my job here. I work hard. I can take the letters round.'

Comments

Empowerment

Empowerment at work is a crucial issue in John's case. Because he has a very supportive family which is willing to devote time and energy to ensure that he remains at work, his employers liase with its members about any difficulties he may have. This means that he is still very much seen as the child of his parents and not as an independent young adult. Without considerable support, however, he would not be able to work. He needs support from a different stable source which would enable him to change his present role within his family.

Support

A major element of support for John is the Sheltered Placement Scheme.

John's sponsor is a national voluntary organisation concerned with disabilty which has a major commitment to this service. They are able to provide skilled support to both John and his employer.

John has a very supportive employer. Support is offered to all employers from within the organisation while they are at work, e.g. via the welfare department, supervisor, trade unions and the personnel department. Within the personnel department, two people are designated as having responsibility for people with disabilities. They can become involved in offering help and advice in an informal way.

Multi-agency collaboration

The Sheltered Placement Scheme is an excellent example of inter-agency collaboration.

John is also supported by the collaborative work of his Disablement Resettlement officer (DRO), former tutor, work superviser and parents.

The way in which John's employer provides support is based on a multi-agency network, which can include specific disability organisations. John does not, however, use the network himself. It is used on his behalf by his parents. He would benefit from an advocate who would help and support him in making more decisions himself so that he would not be so dependent on his parents.

Michael

Employment Rehabiltation Unit

Michael is 27 years old. He is a slightly built man who looks younger than his actual age. Possibly because he cannot see himself clearly in the mirror, his hair and clothes appear unkempt. He is partially sighted and needs spectacles and a magnifying glass to read print. He has epilepsy

which is well-controlled at present and has, in the past, had migraines, which are currently in remission. He is an intelligent man and talks fluently about his experiences of employment.

Michael says:

> 'I attended a special school for children with visual impairment. It gave me no preparation at all for employment. In particular, I thought that because the school was an adapted environment and the staff understood all about my difficulties, it did not prepare me for an unadapted factory or office or for people who did not know what to expect of me or what I could see and not see. I can read print but I can't read joined-up writing. At school I hadn't had to explain things like this and so I didn't know that I would have to tell people about them.
>
> I left school at 16 and came straight to this employment rehabilitation centre. I was trained in work routines and production line work. Sometimes I did heavier work in the loading bay. I was assessed for the Sheltered Employment Scheme and went to a large company as a messenger. I also learned to operate microfiche display units. I wanted to be a VDU operator.
>
> The Disablement Resettlement Officer got me my first job. He wrote 120 applications. There were four replies. One did not want to go on with an application. Two turned me down after discussions with the DRO and my teachers behind my back. One was an offer of an interview. This led to the job. This was the response with the support of the Sheltered Placement Scheme. What would have happened if I had tried to get a job on my own without support?
>
> I learned VDU operating and moved to a large music company where I loaded information and updated records. They liked my work there because, although my work is very slow, it is accurate and the company needed accuracy more than speed for the work I was doing.
>
> The company eventually decided to close down this aspect of their work and the big mainframe computer with international capacity was no longer needed.
>
> The boss knew what was going to happen and formed his own company. He employed me and a small number of other employees. Because he could not find suitable premises we all worked from home, using equipment supplied by him. He was then offered a job with big money in Australia and wound up the company giving us all two weeks' notice.
>
> Because I couldn't get another job I had to return to the employment rehabilitation centre. I am now doing the same simple production work which I did when I left school. Now they have computer equipment here but they are BBC Micros - not Amstrads. There is only one person who can teach computer operation and he can't be with you all the time. There is not enough work to keep me busy for any length of time and I don't

want to experiment with computers, I want to use them for work.

Being here is useful because you have to work regular hours from 8.30am to 5pm every day. It is good for learning workshop skills. They can't offer advanced training for VDU operators.

I have all the equipment that I need to work. All I need are my glasses and my magnifying glass. I am looking forward to getting a new job.'

Comments

Empowerment

Michael is very positive about the Employment Rehabilitation Unit and clearly values the opportunities it has given him, both initially in preparation for his first job, and now in giving structure and purpose to his days. However, he does not remember being part of any decisions about attending. He was not part of the application process for his first job which was done on his behalf and not *with* him. There were also discussions, in which he was not included, about his suitability for jobs.

Support

Michael's school could have supported him more effectively by offering better preparation for the outside world, particularly by allowing him to experience non-adapted environments and enabling him to have more contact with people who were not used to his difficulties.

He has received support from his DRO and fro[illegible] the manager of the Employment Rehabilitation Unit which he now at[illegible]nds.

Michael is also supported by the Sheltered Placement Scheme because of the limitations on his speed caused by his visual impairment - he has to read out loud, for example, because his field of vision is so restricted that he loses the sense otherwise - and because he has not been taught to touch-type.

He would benefit from a single support person who could provide access to training. He would be more employable if he could touch-type and if he received some support with self-help skills, particularly with personal hygiene and managing his hair and clothing since he cannot see them.

Michael has lost a great deal of self-confidence through becoming unemployed and returning to the same unit where he receives substantially the same training as he did when he left school. He can obviously make a success of a job when his needs are acknowledged, but he needs specific support to get him back into the employment market and to enable him to take more control of his working life.

Multi-agency collaboration

Michael would have benefited from collaboration between his school and employment preparation agencies before leaving school. This would have given him an earlier introduction to the demands of employment and more time to learn to meet them. This possibility now exists and the Employment Rehabilitation Unit offers work experience to young people in their final year in the school.

Michael could learn to type properly through a college programme in conjuction with learning other employment skills at the ERU.

Alexandra

Sheltered Workshop and retail outlet

Alexandra has severe learning difficulties and attended a school for children with this kind of disability until she was 19 years old.

She particularly enjoys her present job. Alexandra says she was bored at the Social Education Centre (SEC) she was attending and began to 'make trouble'. A worker asked her if she wanted a job and she said 'yes'. Alexandra did not know what the work would be and although she was accompanied by a worker on her first day's trip to work on the bus, she was frightened at the prospect.

Comments

Empowerment

Alexandra cannot remember work being mentioned until she was asked about this job nor remember being told what the job was, or where she would be working.

It may be chance which brought about Alexandra's employment as it seemed to depend on being able to manage a particular bus journey.

Her job is making arrangements of dried and silk flowers for sale in the shop which is part of the premises of the workshop which provides sheltered employment for people with learning difficulties.

Support

Without a particularly supportive manageress, who helped her with all aspects of her new working life, including appropriate clothes for walking to and from the bus stop, it is unlikely that Alexandra would have even completed the trial period.

Alexandra would have benefited from a structured work preparation curriculum and the support of a professional whose job included supporting her transition to an active adult working life. She would then have been less dependent on her manageress and more her 'own person' at work.

Alexandra would like to live independently of her parents but no one appears to have a role in facilitating this. It is unlikely to happen, as the area in which she lives is particularly short of appropriate accommodation and social workers who could offer support.

Multi-agency collaboration

Alexandra would have been helped by collaboration between the staff at the Social Education Centre and her prospective employers, which would have enabled her to have a proper programme of transition.

She would have benefited from a two-year specially designed programme in further education which included a pre-vocational element and work experience. This could have been followed by a specially designed YTS or a move to an SEC which enabled clients to make a planned move to work. Unfortunately, FE provision for students with severe learning difficulties was not available in her Local Education Authority when Alexandra left school.

Graham

Employment Rehabilitation Unit

Graham is 22. His employment potential was quickly realised by the SEC he attended.

Graham says:

> 'I'm a bit slow at learning things. When I left school I went to a Social Education Centre. I did weighing up nails, putting them in bags and stapling them over.
>
> The only reason I got a job was that Mr A (an instructor at the Social Education Centre) saw it in the paper and phoned up the laundry. I think that the decision that I should look at the job was shared between me and Mr A. I got the job at the laundry but I was sacked because I did not do it fast enough. I could do it properly but a normal person could do it more faster.
>
> On the day I got the sack Mr S (the manager of the Employment Rehabilitation Unit which Graham now attends) came to the laundry. He was coming to visit someone else on the day I got the sack. He did not know me and I did not know about the Unit. If Mr S hadn't happened to have come I would never have known about it. If I hadn't come to the Unit I would just have stayed at home.
>
> While I was working at the laundry no-one from the Social Education Unit came to visit me. I did not get any help from the Social Education Centre.'

Comments

Empowerment

Because Graham attended a school for children with severe learning

difficulties, he moved automatically at 19 to the Social Education Centre. He was assumed to be unemployable, but in fact he was considered to be ready for employment very soon after his transfer to the SEC.

Although Graham felt involved in the decision about this particular job, he had not been part of any previous discussions about his readiness for employment. He was not given information about the opportunities available to him when he left school and could therefore not make any decisions about his future.

Support

The Employment Rehabilitaion Unit is now preparing Graham for a re-entry into employment and this time the manager will provide support for him when he has gained a job. This support cannot be intensive because, although the manager is very committed to this work, there are many other calls on his time.

Multi-agency collaboration

Graham would have benefited from collaboration between the Social Education Centre and Employment Services within the borough. This would have enabled him to be properly prepared for employment and offered him support at work.

Collaboration between the services he uses and the Disablement Resettlement Officer would result in better support and the possibility of a sheltered placement.

Further education colleges in Graham's Education Authority do not offer programmes for students with severe learning difficulties. Had they been available, he would have benefited from the integrated setting, different expectations and education for autonomy which this provision offers. FE can also act as a focus for transition and can enable the student to make sense of what he learned at school as well as to plan for the future.

Charles

A work preparation scheme for people with disabilities

Charles is an intelligent and thoughtful person with great strength of personality and will. He is no longer a young man but the experiences he talks about come from his early adult life; he is able to look back on them with mature insight.

In 1968 as a very young man, Charles was involved in a major accident when his brain was damaged as a result of head injury.

Charles' brain damage has resulted in the loss of the use of one arm, a difficulty in walking and in some impairment in the clarity of his speech.

He has been unemployed since then - over 20 years.

He vividly describes the 'empty world' of those 20 years.

> 'The basic problem is boredom, which leads to depression. The lack of money is bad but the most frustrating thing is that your mind is working and you can't use it. You are stuck inside four walls and can't get out. You are dependent on someone else, or on the state.
>
> I was discharged from hospital five years after the accident. I felt I couldn't get out and at that time was a wheelchair user. A Rehabilitation Unit at a local hospital got me walking again but their support could not be extended because of shortage of staff and money.
>
> No-one thought I would ever work again. My father actually said "You'll never work again".
>
> I have received support in getting back to work only in the last two or three years.
>
> All help with employment started with a Disablement Resettlement Officer who got everything moving.
>
> My first move towards employment was taking a place on a Community Programme funded by Manpower Services (now replaced by Employment Training funded by the Training Agency). This was not particularly successful as I felt it was very disorganised and did not provide useful training.
>
> I also had problems with benefits, some of which I lost as a result of being on the scheme. It took six months after the end of the Programme for my previous benefits to be restored.
>
> I had lost out on an increase which I would have received if I had remained on the benefit.
>
> While I was actually on the Community Programme I was only £9 a week better off, with considerably more expenses than I would have had at a day centre - fares, clothes, lunches and everything.
>
> These experiences with money turned my father right off and they (family) tried to put pressure on me to accept unemployment for the rest of my life.
>
> I was not prepared to do this. I applied here and I am four weeks into an Employment Training programme (at a specialist work preparation unit). I have been assessed for the Sheltered Placement Scheme (see John above) and am building up keyboard and computing skills to enable me to become an accounting technician. I really want to work again.
>
> I will need adapted equipment to enable me to work but I do not forsee difficulties with this. The Unit is well-used to helping people with this.'

Comments

Empowerment

Because Charles had reached adulthood before his accident he had already reached a degree of autonomy. Although it has taken him so many years to begin regaining his status as a productive worker, he does not seem to need empowering in the same way as some people who have always been disabled. He has struggled to maintain his adult status in the face of considerable dependence on his parents. His story highlights the fragility of adult status. It can be lost for ever in the face of this kind of life experience. It is only by exerting his own personality that Charles has regained adult status. Had he been a different person he would have remained dependent for the rest of his life.

There is very little support to help people who become suddenly severely disabled regain their independence particularly in employment.

Support

As a young newly disabled man Charles received no support as part of any rehabilitation programme that would enable him to re-enter employment. At a time when he had newly made the transition to adulthood and employment, he not only had to adapt to a different concept of himself and the adult life ahead of him, but to the loss of a major aspect of adult identity. He is now able to challenge assumptions about his employability himself, but would have have benefited from support in doing this many years ago, and gained an individual training curriculum which would have equipped him for a different kind of work after his accident.

Multi-agency collaboration

Charles needed collaboration between medical services, social services, education and vocational training agencies during his recovery from his accident. Because no such collaboration occurred he was not supported adequately in regaining all the lost aspects of his life.

Charles has forced agencies to support him by his own determination to succeed in employment and to regain his adult status.

If medical, social, education and training services do not collaborate to enable people who have become disabled to regain their adult roles, young people who become disabled today may be repeating Charles' story - or a less successful version of it - in 20 years' time.

Paula

A work preparation scheme for people with disabilities

Paula has experiences in common with Charles but on a very different time scale. Fifteen months ago she underwent major surgery for a brain tumour. She has a weakness of her right side and her sight is deteriorating.

Although her difficulties were experienced nearly 20 years later than George's, she still did not receive any preparation for re-entry to employment as part of a rehabilitation programme, even though she had previously been in full-time employment as a skilled secretary.

Paula says:

> 'When I came out of hospital for the second time I felt I was becoming very depressed. I needed to get back to work to retain my sanity. I wanted to work because I need to feel useful again and get out of myself. I had to find ways to fill the days, I just wanted to get back into the world. I knew it was important to get work to give me back my confidence.
>
> I asked my social worker to help me find out information about retraining and I was told about the work preparation unit. I enjoy the programme which I feel is useful. I also attend college two days a week.
>
> As a black woman with some disabilities I may have difficulties in getting a job. I am often depressed by this. I also feel that, as many job applications ask for initial health information, I will be screened out before being given a chance to demonstrate my abilities.'

Comments

Empowerment

Paula is a capable woman, with an existing range of secretarial skills that can be adapted to minimise her difficulties (e.g. audiotyping instead of shorthand; a large-screen VDU with adjustable type size and density to compensate for the way in which her vision is affected). She was an adult used to being in control of her own life before her illness. She would, however, have welcomed an assumption on the part of the services involved after her illness, that her adult status would continue after the treatment.

Support

Paula feels supported on the Employment Training programme, which she has now begun. She would have benefited from support with coming to terms with her disability, and the difficulties she may face as a disabled employee.

Multi-agency collaboration

Co-ordination between medical, employment, and social services would have made Paula's recovery of her adult status easier. She feels that her life is divided into separate compartments because each agency deals with a different aspect of her life, and that only her own drive to work again has enabled her to cope.

Hilary

Employment Training

Not all young people with disabilities are able to make a transition into adulthood immediately on leaving full-time education. Hilary's story illustrates the kinds of assumptions made about people with disabilities.

Hilary says:

'I was educated in a mainstream school until secondary level when my epilepsy was said to be causing too much trouble. I was transferred to a special boarding school. The school had a post-16 course but I had to be hospitalised before I could move on to it. I left school with no qualifications and no preparation for employment. Because of my health problems at that time, I lost my chance of growing up properly and could find no way of getting back into 'the system' later.

At 16 I was heavily medicated and spent my days in a centre amongst considerably older people. The centre was not focused on rehabiliation and I thought of it as somewhere to pass the time.

Looking back now I feel that the attitude I came across at that time was: "You're disabled and that's it; if you are someone with a disability you can't work."

Later I was assessed by a DRO but this was a very negative experience. All my suggestions were overruled.

I spent several years at home until recently my hospital discovered that I didn't have epilepsy after all. The diagnosis is now unclear and so, although I am registered as a disabled person, I can no longer put a name to my disability. The psychologist at the hospital suggested that I contact this training course.

So at 29 I am looking for employment for almost the first time. Several years ago I worked for four months, as a care assistant in an old people's home. For the first two months I worked in a voluntary capacity and then was transferred to the casual pay-roll. However, I then had to have a medical examination and my epilepsy (as it was then diagnosed) was discovered. I was not accepted as fit for employment. Looking back I wish I could have had both information on my rights and the support of someone who could have helped me in challenging this decision. I was carrying out the job perfectly well. At the time I felt that you just have to accept it.

All sorts of decisions were made for me which I would have liked to have been involved in. For example, I was registered as disabled by my Disablement Rehabilitation Officer but I had no part in the decision of whether to be registered or not.

My ambition as a child was to be a nurse and I now have the skills to apply for a job in a hospital - in medical records, with additional responsibilities as a relief receptionist.

My major handicap now is my lack of experience of the world, society in general and of employment. Although I am excited at the prospect of working I do have a great fear of the unknown.

I would welcome someone to turn to, once I am in employment, if I need to.'

Comments

Empowerment

Although Hilary is now approaching 30, there are ways in which her transition clock stopped 13 years ago. Only now can she look towards a transition to adult status. Employment will be a major part of this.

Support

With appropriate support, Hilary may either have been able to maintain her job as a care assistant, or to have received appropriate training for some other form of employment, without having to wait for so long for aspects of her transition to an active adult life to take place.

Hilary would welcome some support in employment but unless it is supplied informally by the Employment Training programme, which has prepared her for work, none will be available.

Multi-agency collaboration

Hilary was given information about training for employment by the psychologist at her hospital. More effective collaboration between medical, employment and social services would have made her life a great deal easier. One way of achieving this collaboration would have been by offering Hilary an Individual Programme Plan, which would have enabled her to meet representatives of services who would help her plan for her future and set appropriate goals. Services can then fit together and be co-ordinated towards Hilary's goals.

Richard

Seeking employment

Richard is 25 years old. Like Hilary, he has applied for his first job, but was 'lost to the system' for important transitional years while he provided companionship for his mother. He then decided to act on his own behalf.

Richard says:

'I left school at 16 and went to college for a year. At the end of that year everything went downhill. Me and my mum were moved by the council into a block of flats. We had trouble with a gang of boys.

My mum was always ill and I stayed at home all the time reading books and watching television and drawing. This went on for

about six years. I can't remember anybody talking about work or saying that they would help me get a job.

When I was at school I had been on two work-experience placements. One, at a supermarket, was a bit of a disaster. But I think that I learned not to be afraid of asking if you don't know, and to try and get on with people.

A year ago I left home on the spur of the moment and came to London. I was in a Salvation Army hostel at first and was referred to a some people who helped me.

I am slow at doing things and I need time to get faster at things. I have always found it hard to read and write and I am much better at using my hands. I don't like the word disability.

I think I have learned more during one year in London than I did in the ten years before. I have learned to make decisions for myself; not to be shy with strangers; not to be afraid to speak out for myself; and to use public transport. I learned just by doing it - if you find the river you can find where you are. I got lost lots of times but I didn't worry about it.

At the centre I go to three days a week, I saw an advertisement for a kitchen porter's job. I have had help from my DRO but I saw this advertisement myself. I asked someone to help me apply and I am going to an interview next week. I will go to the interview by myself.

I don't know what support I will need when I am at work because I have never done a job before and can't really imagine what it will be like. I want a job because you feel more, like, normal; you feel you are doing something. I have to prove to myself I can do it.'

Comments

Empowerment

Although he needs support, Richard has taken control of his own life very firmly and any help which is provided would need to take proper account of this.

Support

Richard seems to have received very little support while he was living with his mother. If he had been able to gain employment earlier he may have been able to manage his transition to adult life without having to take the drastic action which made him homeless.

He would benefit from support into, and within, employment to ensure that the adult status he has achieved is developed and not lost or damaged by too many experiences of failure or difficulty.

Multi-agency collaboration

From his account, there seems to have been no link up between

Richard's college and any other provision. When he left college no progression appears to have been planned.

Richard now lives in a hostel but the staff there do not seem to be supporting him in preparing for work or in getting a job.

Rita

Wishing to set up her own business

Rita is a young woman whose disability is invisible. She has sickle cell disease and is therefore subject to periodic spells of disabling pain and ill health. Although this was a clear pattern during her childhood and adolescence, she was not helped at school by any explanation as to what this might mean when she came to arrange her working life.

Rita says:

> 'I have a vague memory of meeting a careers officer when I was at school but I received no advice on the kind of work that I might find possible.
>
> After school I took a clerical course at my local college of further education and then went into temporary work so that I could work when I was well enough. I then took a post with a Health Authority, thinking that I was part of a team so my absences could be covered. However, I soon found myself in a position of responsibility where my periods of illness made it difficult for me to cover the work and there was no-one else to take the responsiblility.
>
> I was pensioned off after eight months in this post and was unemployed for a year. During this time I received no help or support in returning to employment. I think that I could have become deeply depressed and ultimately unemployable if I hadn't heard of my current Employment Training course through the Sickle Cell Society. Work gives me independence, satisfaction, and money. I am ambitious and I always wanted a career in something I enjoyed.
>
> In the future I will either work from home, especially using information technology, or I will set up my own business so that I can work when I am able to.'

Comments

Empowerment

Rita is fully in control of her life as a young adult and any support she would use would have to acknowledge this. She does not need support to achieve adult status but she does need it to sustain employment.

Support

It is likely that there are many people with sickle cell disease or other conditions which make it impossible for them to establish themselves into the usual patterns of full-time continuous employment. Not all of them will have Rita's drive and initiative and, if the lack of support she has received is in any way typical, many will be unemployed.

There is a need for the development of flexible working patterns which would enable people with chronic disabling illnesses or conditions to work in periods of good health.

There is a need to explore IT-based employment projects for people with disabilities.

Rita would have benefited from a curriculum which included learning about the implications of her own disability.

Multi-agency collaboration

The sharing of i nformation between voluntary organisations and agencies concerned wih employment would enable people like Rita to receive better-quality advice on the most appropriate career pattern.

Employers who employ workers with this type of periodic disability need to liase with voluntary organisations, in order to understand the implications of such a disabling condition and the need for flexible working arrangements.

Conclusion

Both Chapters 4 and 5 confirm and develop the findings of NACEDP described in Chapter 3. Employers are indeed seeking competence centred around vocational skills, social skills and growing autonomy. Each area has been identified as presenting particular difficulties for many young people with disabilities. Most of the preparation and placement agencies interviewed were well aware of the competence needed and had developed their educational and training curricula accordingly. They were even more aware, however, that two or three years' particular concentration on these areas is not enough to compensate for the progressive development and increasing expectations of full adult status which is often denied to children and young people with disabilities.

In this Chapter, some of the extra difficulties in obtaining and keeping employment have been vividly described by people with disabilities. These people have, however, overcome many of the difficulties they have encountered.

Interviews with young people who are not in employment or are not being prepared for it appropriately would have demonstrated the difficulties even more clearly. These young people are often at home and not in contact with any agency or service. They are very difficult to contact and the time constraints of this study did not allow us to try. Their unspoken stories, however, provide a rather uncomfortable balance to the relatively optimistic accounts given here.

6. Discussion and recommendations

Discussion

The people featured in the previous chapter have very little in common as individuals, and their disabilities and the ways in which the disabilities affect their lives also vary.

They have, however, many things in common with regard to employment:

- they clearly regard employment as important;
- they have all experienced, or are experiencing, a lack of empowerment and lack of control in decisions in their own lives;
- they are all in the process of moving to full adult status or regaining lost adult roles;
- they would benefit from appropriate support in employment;
- their employment prospects could be improved by inter-agency communication and collaboration;
- they have more difficulty in finding and keeping employment than other people.

The paradox of support for autonomy

This study emphasises the support needs of young people with disabilities with regard to employment; it urges collaboration with young people in developing support for them as they enter adult life. Adult status, on the other hand, demands self-sufficiency.

Clearly, there is a paradox in being dependent on support for independence. Support is often seen as incompatible with adult status and as taking away autonomy, and people interviewed about their potential support needs were concerned that they might be committing themselves to intrusive and unwelcome interventions. The idea of being targeted for support by a number of agencies working together was particularly perturbing!

An example of inappropriate support destroying the autonomy of a young person was given by one employer. Barry had come into work supported by the Sheltered Employment Scheme, a social worker and a key worker from his new hostel. In order to help him gain skills for independent living, the key worker enrolled him in an extensive programme of evening classes just at the time when the young man began his first job. He was not able to sustain this demanding schedule and began to falter both at work and in his classes. At his next

Individual Programme Plan meeting it was decided by his key workers to end Barry's employment as it was 'too tiring'. His employer feels that, without the evening classes at a time when Barry was just getting used to work, and if he had been able to make his own decisions, he would still be employed. He would now be able to think about more skills for other areas of his life. Barry was happy at work and was doing well before the extra demands were made and was upset at having to leave his job. It would seem that the key worker has, in the name of support for greater independence, closed one of Barry's routes to adult status.

Support need not, and should not, disempower those who use it. It should not make them embarrassed, encourage dependence, overwhelm or encourage those who use it to feel that they are failing in some way. Support is not incompatible with personal autonomy, self-sufficiency or full adult status.

All adults, including those who are regarded as having high status in our society, use suppport systems. For example, legal support may be given by a solicitor, financial support by a banker, or administrative support by a secretary; those who use such support to maintain their jobs and their personal lives do not regard themselves as less than autonomous. This is because *these support systems are within the control of the individual concerned who decides what support is needed and when.*

Specific support for young people with disabilities should be made available in exactly the same way. People should have the choice of when and how to use specialist services in exactly the same way as they would with services used by other adults.

If the individual controls the support, rather than being disempowered by it, there is no contradiction between the need for support and full, autonomous adult status.

Young people with disabilities may need help in managing and using support systems, which are, or should be, available to them.

For very young or inexperienced people, an advocate or named person could provide a role-model for this. The role of an advocate could then include an educational element so that young people develop their own self-advocacy skills. People with very severe intellectual impairment may need the support of an advocate on a long-term basis to work with them in achieving an appropriate degree of control.

How can access to employment best be facilitated for young people with disabilities?

Young people with disabilities are likely to have better access to employment if the following are addressed:

- their general needs as young people during the period of transition from school to employment. These will include the need for specific training for current job opportunities as described in Chapter 2, and the requirements of employers as shown in Chapter 4;

- the additional difficulties experienced by young people with difficulties, as found by NACEDP in Chapter 3 and illustrated by people with disabilities in Chapter 5;
- the barriers to employment, such as physical access or lack of adapted transport, and, importantly, prejudice.

General needs

Young people with disabilities need access to the common core curriculum designed for all young people in transition. TVEI, CPVE, and YTS specifically address transition to a working adult life and they must form the basis of vocational education and training for *all young people*.

Specific needs of young people with disabilities

In order for these needs to be met, young people should have access to an expanded core curriculum which focuses specifically on boosting competence and developing autonomy.

The common core and its expansion form an empowerment curriculum for young people with disabilities.

If the empowerment curriculum is linked with a multi-agency support network, available to young people themselves and based on accurate, easily accessed information, young people with disabilities will have the best possible chance of success in employment.

Recommendations

That consideration be given to the following:

The development of a 'named person' system

This development should begin with the examination of the 'Kurator' system operating in Denmark which supports young people with disabilities during the period of transition (OECD/CERI, 1986). The Kurator works with 13-14-year-olds in schools and then assists the young people by providing support until at least two years after they have left school.

The Kurator:

- is school based;
- has a small teaching commitment;
- liaises closely with local employers and training schemes;
- liaises with parents;
- provides a continual point of reference for young people in transition as they move through the different phases of school, training and employment;
- provides advice, information and counselling.

It is recommended that:

- an evaluation be made of the Kurator system and an assessment of its potential for adaptation to meet UK needs;
- a pilot project be mounted if a successful adaptation can be made, in a selected number of LEAs in the UK;
- the pilot project be located in FE, but involve other agencies working in the field;
- the pilot be co-ordinated and evaluated and the findings disseminated by the FEU as a follow-on to the activities of the UK contribution to the OECD/CERI Disabled Action Programme;
- that multi-agency funding be sought for this work.

The development of an expanded core curriculum for young people with disabilities

The need for a coherent common core for the education and training of all young people has been recognised. The then Secretary of State for Education and Science described such a common core in his speech to the Annual Conference of the Association of Colleges of Further and Higher Education in February 1989. He described it as consisting of:

- communication skills;
- numeracy skills;
- inter-personal skills;
- familiarity with technology;
- familiarity with employment systems;
- familiarity with changing working and social contexts.

The Secretary of State envisaged that skills will be taught in an integrated way and translated into individual programmes. This has particular relevance to the development of Individual Programme Plans for people with disabilities.

It is recommended that all young people, regardless of disability, have appropriate access to this common core, together with an additional element which enables them more fully to understand their disability and its implications for a future working life.

Considerable work has already been undertaken in this area by the FEU. *Towards a Framework for Curriculum Entitlement* (FEU, 1989) describes the aims of all post-16 education and training as being the provision of:

- appropriate learning opportunities regardless of gender, race, age and ability;
- opportunities for all learners to establish and develop a recognised competence base of knowledge, skills and experience, sufficient to facilitate progression into employment, FE, training and other roles;

- an understanding of the local and national economic and social environment to promote an appreciation of the variety of available adult roles in society;
- a basis for learners to increase their self-awareness, to appraise realistically their potential and prospects, and to become progressively responsible for negotiating their own personal development.

The same aims, relating to high-quality individual-centred learning are focused more specifically on vocational training in *Relevance, Flexibility and Competence* (FEU, 1987) and *Supporting Quality in YTS* (FEU, 1989).

The expanded core

To achieve these aims with young people with disabilities, the expanded core, both in education and in training, would include:

- *the development of autonomy*. This could be achieved by directly addressing the underdevelopment of those skills and experiences which most non-disabled young people will have gained, but whose lack may handicap a young person with a disability (see Chapter 3);
- *the development of an appropriate understanding by the learner of his or her own disability*. This could include an awareness of the way in which it may affect opportunities in employment, together with the development of strategies for managing the disability to ensure that the individual has the widest possible range of options. Some young people would need the support of an advocate to achieve this;
- *the development of both self-advocacy skills* and the skills needed to make best use of an advocate. This should be related both to the use of The Disabled Persons Act 1986, which gives access to support for adults with disabilities, as well as to the wider context. An FEU/REPLAN project associated with this series of studies is exploiting the use of portfolios in the development of self-advocacy skills with people with disabilities;
- *information* on the range of equipment, aids, appliances, and existing support services which the individual may wish to use;
- *information* on locally available support services such as specialist training for employment, training schemes for independent living and self-help groups of people with disabilites which the young person may wish to use.

The development of inter-agency collaboration

Agencies can work together in two distinct ways:

- working with people with disabilities to produce a better range and quality of services;
- being co-ordinated by the individual, with or without support, to

achieve his or her own life goals. Individual programme planning at its best can provide an excellent example of this.

It is recommended that:

- Government Departments and statutory and voluntary agencies at a national and regional level develop more effective ways of working together with people with disabilities, and their representatives, to improve overall services with regard to employment.
- Local agencies and individuals develop ways of working together for the improvement of local employment-based services.

The development of a referral system for young adults who become disabled

A regional system is needed through which people with acquired disabilities can be contacted and offered, as part of their rehabilitation process, information on ways in which they can re-enter employment. This offer should be made to all people of working age and repeated at regular intervals if it is declined. If an individual does not yet feel ready to re-enter employment, or does not wish to do so, there should be the right to refuse the offer of support, or to keep the offer open for the future. Charles and Paula (see Chapter 5) demonstrate the need for such a service. It is recommended that consideration is given as to whether collaboration between District Health Authority and the Disablement Resettlement Service or the Specialist Careers Service could produce such a system. It is also recommended that the Training Agency and LEAs should collaborate in providing more effective re-education and retraining for employment.

Further testing and exploration of the support-led model

This model offers opportunities for work for everyone, regardless of the severity of their disability.

None of the employers interviewed had experience of employees who received the extended on-the-job support which is described in Chapter 5. *It is recommended that an exploration is undertaken* of the experiences of employers and those people who receive extensive support, and of the views of their fellow workers.

It is also recommended that an exploration is undertaken of the changes which employment actually brought about in the adult status of those employed.

This work could explore the common issues surround people who have paid employment but do not appear to have full adult status. This could lead to greater clarity about the role of employment in adulthood.

A subsidiary provision to employers who take on people who have been out of work for over a year

Layard (1986) suggests this would be an attractive economic alternative

to making support available to the long-term unemployed. Such a system would be of direct benefit to young people with a disability who are likely to experience long-term unemployment. Demographic changes may make this unnecessary as fewer school-leavers will be available to fill vacancies, and other groups of potential employees will be sought.

The development of multi-agency staff development

These would be for professionals and concern the value of employment in the lives of people with a disability and their support needs.

Every agency which deals either with employment or with people with disabilities should examine the contribution it could make in this area. FE should take the lead in providing training,in co-operation with the Training Agency.

A thorough exploration of the attainment of adult status

This would involve adults who have already achieved an active adult life without paid employment.

It would be of particular benefit to young people with disabilities, but would also be of use to both young people and adults who are unable to find or undertake paid work.

The future drop in the number of school-leavers in any one year should have implications for previously undervalued groups in the employment market, e.g. people from ethnic minorities; women; older people and people with disabilities. As the 'demographic time bomb' explodes, employers will not be able to find enough young people to fill vacancies. Scarcity of workers will make those who are *available and prepared* more valuable.

Employment should certainly be a real option, whenever this is at all possible, for people with disabilities. Employment is, however, only one of a range of adult activities which contribute to adult status. The primary objective should be to ensure that no form of disability bars anyone from enjoying a normal range of adult experience, autonomy and responsibility.

Appendix A. The study

Background

This study focuses on strategies for support in employment.

It is specifically based on paragraphs 7.17.5 and 7.18.5 of the Feasibility Study for the UK Contribution to the OECD/CERI Disabled Action Programme: *Transition to Adult Life* (available on request from FEU).

Paragraph 7.17.5 is entitled 'A Continuation of Support Beyond Recruitment' and reads:

> 'It is widely perceived that a substantial number of people with disabilities fail to sustain employment because appropriate support is not available once employment has been obtained. This perception needs to be tested, and models developed to meet the needs of the employers and the employee.'

Paragraph 7.18.5 states that a major recommendation for future development of services would need to be based on the exploration of the support needs of young people once they have been recruited. Such explorations would need to consider the perspectives of both the employer and the employee.

The review of perceptions of support needs has been extended to include preparation and placement agencies in order to compare them with the reality of the employment situation for both employer and employee.

The Feasibility Study states that although services are unco-ordinated and patchy, many routes to employment exist for young people with disabilities, and a range of agencies exist to facilitate their recruitment by employers. However, in terms of service provision, the achievement of a job is seen as the satisfactory conclusion of a process, and most services lead up to, and stop at, that point.

When services continue, they seem most likely to come into operation only when difficulties occur. A young disabled employee who presents no overt problems is unlikely to receive ongoing support, opportunities for reassessment, training opportunities, or development towards progression, unless these are made available by her or his employer as a general policy and she or he can make use of this offer.

It is hoped that this study will identify the kind of ongoing support which would be most beneficial to all those concerned in the

employment of young people with disabilities and which they would choose to use.

The support mechanisms and systems identified would be built up and delivered on a multi-agency basis, to be seleced by individuals as required.

Aims

The intention is to identify a range of perceptions of the support needed by young people with disabilities when they are in employment.

The perceptions explored will be those of:

- agencies which prepare young people for employment, e.g. schools, colleges of further education, YTS;
- agencies which place young people in employment or facilitate their placement, DRO, MENCAP Pathway Officer;
- employers;
- young employees with disabilities.

These perceptions are to be placed within the context of the current employment situation in the UK and within the present concept of the needs of young people with disabilities.

Method

A series of inter-related questionnaires was created (see Appendix C) for gathering information from those indicated in the aims above.

In early 1989 a series of semi-structured interviews was carried out, using these questionnaires.

The questionnaires were sent out in advance to enable those participating to give thought to their replies and gather relevant information in preparation for the interview.

The results of the interviews were then analysed and the information is presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of this document. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 provide a national context for this.

Information

A steering group was set up to:

- be accountable for the work of the study;
- demonstrate inter-agency co-operation;
- facilitate and support future inter-agency work in this area beyond the life of the study.

The composition of the steering group reflected the different phases of preparation for employment, job placement and support in employment. Employers were actively sought to allow the inclusion of

representation of open employment, but no employer was found who was willing to take on this role.

Membership of Steering Group

Alain Rialland (Chair)	Remploy, Company Training Manager
Dr Barbara Hilton	ILEA Inspector
Steve Ogilvie	MENCAP Pathway Officer
Jane Pitcher	Head of ILEA Specialist Careers Service
Lance Marshall	Principal, Royal National College for the Blind
Pat Hood	FEU Development Officer
Matthew Griffiths Education, Training and Employment Adviser	MENCAP

Appendix B

Participants in the project

Information, either verbal or written, was received from representatives of the following employers, placement agencies and preparation agencies:

Employers

- Initial Laundries
- Jane Shilton Ltd.
- London Electricity Board
- MENCAP Flowers
- National Library for the Handicapped Child
- Remploy
- The Royal Bank of Scotland
- J. Sainsbury plc
- Trust House Forte
- The Wedge — L'Arche Workshop

Placement agencies

- Blakes Wharf Employment Centre
- Lambeth ACCORD
- Pathway Employment Services:
  - — Barnet
  - — Islington
  - — Sutton
  - — Wandsworth
- Specialist Careers Services:
  - — Barkingside
  - — Brixton
  - — Islington
  - — Lewisham

- Merton
- Peckham
- Reading
- Woolwich

- Tower Hamlets Employment Initiative
- Vox Employment Services

Preparation agencies

- Ellingham Employment Resources
- The Harrington Scheme (YTS)
- Jan Malinowski Social Education Centre
- Merton College of FE - New Path Course
- Oakside Industrial Rehabilitiation Centre
- Rathbone Society Employment Training Project
- Roots 'n' Shoots (YTS)
- Royal National College for the Blind
- Weir Road Employment Assessment Centre

The study wished to capture the experiences of a group of people with as wide a range of disability as possible. The following information is given in order to show how far this was achieved. Either general perceptions of employment or specific personal experiences were given by people with the following range of disabilities (the terms used are those preferred by the respondents):

- deafness
- epilepsy and emotional difficulties
- epilepsy and visual impairment
- epilepsy
- learning difficulties
- learning difficulties
- learning difficulties
- learning difficulties
- learning difficulties
- learning difficulties
- physical impairment caused by head injury
- physical impairment caused by brain tumour
- severe learning difficulties
- severe learning difficulties

- hearing impairment
- total blindness
- visual handicap
- visual impairment and controlled epilepsy
- sickle cell disease
- psychiatric illness

Sincere thanks are extended to all those who gave up their time to respond to the questionnaires or who gave information in a less formal way. Particular thanks are due to people who shared their own experiences of employment for the study.

Appendix C. Questionnaires

Questionnaire for employers

Supported employment for young people with a disability

1. What, in your opinion, is the basic competence necessary for employability and substaining employment?
2. Are there factors which make it difficult for a young person with a disability to gain employment within your organisation?
3. Are there main elements that you feel are vital in the preparation of young people with disability for employment to minimise these difficulties?
4. How and where could preparation best be carried out?
   a) off employers' premises
   b) on employers' premises
5. Are there examples of good preparation for employment that you could quote from your own experience?
6. Are there examples of bad preparation for employment that you could quote from your own experience?
7. Can you name any young people (under about 30) in your organisation who have any of the following disabilities:
   a) significant physical disability
   b) major physical disability
   c) significant learning disability
   d) major learning disability
   e) partial sight
   f) blindness
   g) partial hearing
   h) deafness
   i) clinical psychiatric difficulties
   j) other
8. What kind of support do these young people receive:
   a) from within your organisation?

— in a structured way

— in an informal way

b) from outside agencies?

— in a structured way

— in an informal way

9. If young people are receiving support was it:

a) set up before they entered employment?

b) set up after they entered employment?

c) set up by you, the employer?

10. What kind of support would you wish to be available?

a) to the young person concerned

b) to yourselves as employers

11. Whose responsibility do you think it should be to provide support?

12. Are you approached by careers officers, disabled resettlement officers, training agencies or other professionals with regard to the employment of young people with disability? If so, do they offer any kind of support, either to you or the employee, once the placement has been made?

13. Have you had any good experience of support offered to either a disabled young person or to yourselves as employers?

14. Have you had any very bad experience of support offered to either a disabled young person or to yourselves as employers?

15. Do you have an equal opportunities policy? (If so a copy would be welcomed.)

How far is it implemented?

What areas does it cover?

Questionnaire for placement and preparation agencies

Supported employment for young people with a disability

1. What, in your opinion, is the basic competence necessary for employability and substaining employment?

2. Are there factors which make it difficult for a young person with a disability to gain employment?

3. Are there main elements that you feel are vital in the preparation of young people with disability for employment to minimise these difficulties?

4. How and where could preparation best be carried out?

a) off employers' premises

b) on employers' premises

5. Are there examples of good preparation for employment that you could quote from your own experience?

6. Are there examples of bad preparation for employment that you could quote from your own experience?

7. Can you name any young people (under about 30) who have any of the following disabilities, whom you have successfully placed in employment, prepared for employment:

   a) significant physical disability

   b) major physical disability

   c) significant learning disability

   d) major learning disability

   e) partial sight

   f) blindness

   g) partial hearing

   h) deafness

   i) clinical psychiatric difficulties

   j) other

8. Can you offer any support to young people when they have entered employment:

   a) in a structured way?

   b) in an informal way?

9. Have you been able to offer or suggest support:

   a) which was set up before placement and continued when the young person was in employment?

   b) which was set up after the young person had entered employment?

   c) which was set up at an employer's request?

11. What kind of support would you wish to be available:

   a) to a young disabled person in employment?

   b) to his/her employer?

11. Do you approach employers with regard to the employment of individual young people with a disability? If so, do they ask for any kind of support, either for the young person or for themselves as employers?

12. Do you know of any very good support structures which are offered to either a young disabled employee or to his/her employers?

13. Do you know of any very bad experience of lack of, or failure of, support, which has been experienced either by a young disabled employee or an employer?

14. Are you aware of whether the young people you have placed in employment/prepared for employment are working with employers who have an equal opportunities policy? Does this affect their likelihood of gaining or keeping employment?

Questionnaire for young employees

Supported employment for young people with disabilities

1. What do you think people need to be able to do in order to be able to work and remain in work?

2. What are the factors which make it difficult for a young person with a disability to get a job?

3. What do you think should be done to prepare young people with disabilities for employment to minimise the difficulties you have described?

4. How and where do you think the preparation could best be carried out?

5. Do you think that you were well prepared for employment?

6. Are there any bad things about any preparation for employment you received?

7. (i) How would you describe your own disability?

   (ii) Do you know any other young people (under about 30) in your organisation who have any of the following disabilities:

   a) significant physical disability

   b) major physical disability

   c) significant learning disability

   d) major learning disability

   e) partial sight

   f) blindness

   g) partial hearing

   h) deafness

   i) clinical psychiatric difficulties

   j) other

8. What kind of support do you receive:

   a) from your employers?

   b) from other employees?

   c) from outside agencies?

9. If you are receiving any support, was it:

   a) set up before you went into employment?

   b) set up when or after you became employed?

   c) set up by yourself?

   d) set up by your employer?

10. (a) What kind of support would you like to be available to help you with your employment?

    (b) Is there any support which you think your employer would need?

11. Who do you think should be responsible for giving this support?

12. Have you ever been offered support during your employment by a careers officer, DRO, Pathway officer or any other professional?

13. Have you had any good experience of support being offered to you in employment?

14. Have you had any bad experience of support being unobtainable, or taken away, or offered in a way which was unacceptable to you?

15. Does your employer have an equal opportunities policy? Do you feel that it helps or protects you in your job?

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Part Two

7. An introduction to some education and training opportunities for young people with disabilities in the United Kingdom

Deborah Cooper
Director, Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

This paper describes some of the legislative framework and provision that has developed in the UK to support the education and training of young people with disabilities. It was primarily written for an international audience but is included here as a guide to those new to this area of work and those non-educationists who are involved in furthering employment opportunities for young people with disabilities.

Introduction

Since the Second World War a large number of legal and administrative changes have interacted with changes in demography and employment opportunities to produce a complex pattern of training provision for young people with disabilities. Relevant legislation is usually similar in England and Wales but different in each of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Although many children with disabilities are still educated separately in special schools, there is an emerging commitment to integration, particularly in education and training in the post-16 sector.

In the United Kingdom, a number of words are used to describe disabled people; these are affected by legislation, professional definitions, personal preference and common usage. In the UK, schools and colleges use the term 'people with special educational needs'. This is based on the 1981 Education Act and the 1988 Education Reform Act; the government-funded Youth Training Scheme uses the term 'special needs' to mean a wider group amongst whom are 'young disabled people'. Employment services and the government-funded Employment Training scheme use 'disabled person' defined according to the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944; and Social Services departments, who fund most day centres, use the term 'disabled person' according to the National Assistance Act 1948.

Each definition is somewhat different, and people can find themselves included in one definition but not the other.

There is currently a debate among people with disabilities in the UK about which terms are preferred, in particular between 'people with disabilities' and 'disabled people'.

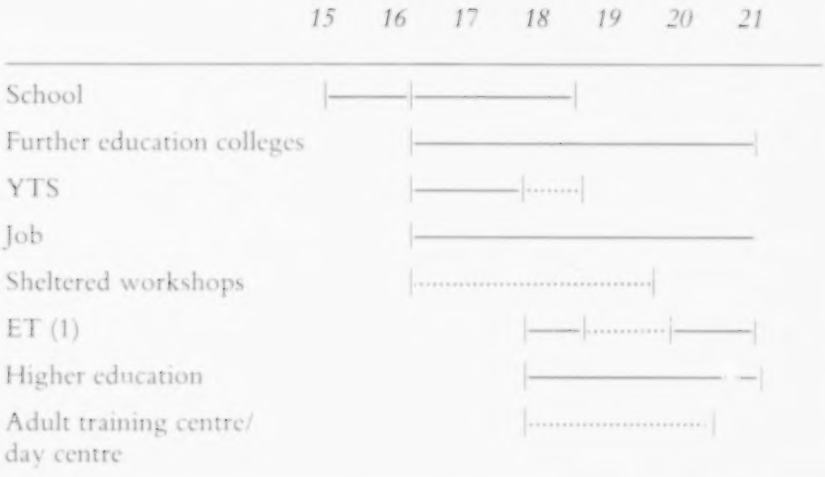
For the sake of uniformity the term 'people with disabilities' is used in

this paper to include people with physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and psychiatric illnesses.

The basic system

In the United Kingdom all young people, whether disabled or not, must stay in school full-time until the age of 16. After that, they may leave school or stay up to the age of 19. If they leave school, they may go to a college of further education where they may follow academic, vocational or general courses. Alternatively, they may join the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) or find a job (where they may also participate in the training element of YTS). After 18, most unemployed people are eligible for Employment Training (ET). Those pursuing an academic career would normally stay in school at 16, but could go to college then, and would usually enter higher education at 18 or 19 for three or four years. Many young people with disabilities have the same options as others, except that they may also go to day centres, a social services-funded provision.

Figure 1: Most common options for 16-21-year-olds, including those with disabilities



(1) ET is available for people of 18 for up to one year at a time but, unless the person can be registered as disabled, they must be unemployed for six months before joining the scheme.

|———| : available to any young person

|·····| : available only to people with disabilities

Figure 1 is a diagramatic representation of opportunities. As each scheme interacts with others in a complex way, each element is described separately below:

School

Most young people enter secondary school between the ages of 11 and 13. Most state-funded schools, i.e. the majority of schools, are comprehensive, which means that they take children of all abilities within their catchment area. Their pupils work towards GCSE examinations at 16, though some pupils take no exams at all. About 1.5% of the school-age population attend special schools and another 0.5%, also deemed to have 'special educational needs' (1981 Education Act), are integrated into mainstream schools. After 16, pupils either pursue academic courses or vocational options, though most vocational courses take place in colleges of further education.

YTS

The Youth Training Scheme offers two years of full-time vocational training and work experience to 16- to 18-year-olds. Young people with disabilities may join at a *later age* and stay for up to two-and a-half-years. The schemes may be run by any approved organisation or voluntary organisation. People with disabilities are either integrated or trained on special schemes. There are many forms of extra help available, including funding for equipment, building adaptations, interpreters for the deaf, readers for the blind and extra training support. In Northern Ireland, YTS is called the Youth Training Programme and has a somewhat different pattern of provision.

Colleges of further education

Colleges run an extensive range of provision for young people with disabilities, who may be supported in 'mainstream' curricula or attending transitional courses which aim to prepare them for wider experiences of integration. Young people with every sort of disability, including those with profound and multiple difficulties, can be found in FE colleges and, although opportunities still depend on local and regional commitment, a growing number of these learners are being supported in the mainstream education and training provided by these colleges. 'Outreach' work too is expanding as colleges work in collaboration with other services to offer programmes to, for example, residents in long-stay hospitals. Some young people with disabilities attend link programmes while they are still at school, which help prepare them for full-time further education.

Voluntary organisations - colleges of FE

Certain voluntary organisations, such as MENCAP, RNIB, the Spastics Society, manage colleges of FE for their particular client group. These offer high-quality vocational training as well as equipping young people with the independence skills needed to manage in employment. For many young people this can be a first experience of living away from home and an all important transitional experience.

ET

Employment Training is available for people aged 18 and over who have been unemployed for over six months, and provides a range of full-time training and work experience based on individual assessments of need. People with disabilities do not have to be unemployed for six months to qualify for ET. They have access to the same range of extra help as YTS trainees.

Employment

Full-time employment is potentially open to anyone from the age of 16 but people with disabilities may receive extra help through schemes such as the MENCAP Pathway Scheme to introduce them to work, and financial assistance to employers is available to integrate severely disabled people (the Sheltered Placement Scheme). Funding for the same kinds of extra help as for those on YTS and ET is also available. People not able to enter open employment may go to Sheltered Workshops, such as those run by Remploy.

Higher education

Colleges of higher education, polytechnics, central institutes (in Scotland) and universities, all offer a range of higher education courses which may be vocational or lead to professional qualification. Most have some experience of accepting students with disabilities, and some have built up particular support arrangements (e.g. special housing for people with physical disabilities at Sussex University, support service for students with hearing impairment at Durham University). The Open University, whose activities are based on open learning, has built up particularly strong support for all students with disabilities and has a very large number of them. Disabled students may receive extra grants from local authorities (education or social services) to ensure their access to higher-level studies.

Adult Training Centres (ATCs), Social Education Centres (SECs), Day Centres

This provision is funded by local authority social services departments and varies considerably in aims and programme content. People with severe disabilities may go to a day centre. Those have tended recently to move away from undertaking industrial work or vocational training, though a growing number have links with colleges for people who wish to pursue some form of vocational training.

Growing opportunities for people with disabilities

Until about ten years ago, very little specialised vocational training was available to young people with disabilities. In 1978 a Government Report, the *Warnock Report* (HMSO, 1978), found almost no opportunities for this group in training schemes or colleges of further

education. Unless severely disabled, most young people with disabilities did not stay in school beyond the age of 16. Many then found low-paid and low-skilled jobs or were unemployed. Most young people with severe learning difficulties or severe physical disabilities were placed in adult training centres/day centres which provided occupational and, occasionally, some work-related training. But most were likely to remain at these establishments for many years, if not all their lives. A few young people went to specialist residential colleges run by voluntary organisations.

In the last ten years, a gradual change has taken place. The specialist colleges and day centres remain, but many more opportunities have opened up. As a result of growing unemployment, the employment opportunities for school-leavers with disabilities became minimal. At the same time, colleges were closing vocational courses as demand fell. Colleges had space and staff to spare. The *Warnock Report* and the 1981 Education Act that followed it had both served to raise the profile of people with disabilities in education, and growing demands by parents, professionals and voluntary organisations resulted in some colleges making some courses available for people with disabilities.

The provision developed and by 1987 there were about 18,500 students aged 16 to 19 with special needs in colleges of FE in England, a further 11,500 students over 19 were also in colleges (Stowell, 1987). A similar growth in opportunities in YTS and adult training (now called ET) developed, and the range of extra funding and support available meant that training providers were able to attract and successfully train people with disabilities.

Relevant legislation and statutory agencies

This section describes English and Welsh legislation only. As indicated earlier, somewhat diffeent legislation applies to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Education

Education is regulated nationally by the Department of Education and Science. It is funded and delivered locally by local education authorities (departments within county councils and metropolitan district councils).

There are three key education acts of parliament relevant to this paper.

The 1944 Education Act ensured that every child and young person had access to free full-time further education (including vocational education) up to the age of 19 and to a range of provision after that.

The 1981 Education Act reorganised provision for students with special needs in schools and although it did not directly affect colleges, it influenced them considerably.

The 1988 Education Act had already revised the legal framework on which provision for children with disabilities could be based and had set out to encourage integration. It also fostered the co-ordination of

planning for the education of young people with disabilities when they left statutory schooling at 16 or 19.

Training and employment

The responsible national body for training and employment is the Department of Employment which has a branch concerned with the needs of people with disabilities. There are local networks of offices and centres where people seeking employment are able to gain specialist advice.

One section of the Department, the Training Agency, has a national responsibility for training. It is responsible for strategic planning and funding although training itself is delivered by a wide range of providers. The legal basis for training is complex.

The 1988 Employment Act gave broad powers to a Training Commission which has since been suspended by the Department's Training Agency.

The legal basis for support towards employment is based on the 1944 Disabled Persons (Employment) Act which created provision for sheltered work and extra support within open employment.

Social services provision

The national body responsible for social services provision is the Department of Social Services. Provision is made locally through the Social Services Departments of local authorities. The main legal basis for social services provision is within the 1948 National Assistance Act and the 1970 Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act.

Some particular programmes that contribute to the smooth transition to employment of people with disabilities include:

- Assessment of needs: although there are slight regional differences, all young people who are deemed to have 'special educational needs' are formally reassessed between the ages of 13½ and 14½, with a view to making appropriate decisions about their needs in adulthood. This allows education and training bodies to gain appropriate vocational experiences.
- Careers guidance and counselling: all young people have access to a careers officer between the ages of about 14-15 and 18. Careers services are funded by education services and nearly every area has a careers officer with responsibility for people with disabilities, who is crucial in helping young people and parents make appropriate choices about routes to adult life. Officers are normally closely involved in the reassessment at 13½-14½, and act as a central focus for making sure all other agencies are involved appropriately.
- Self-advocacy (the ability of people to make decisions for themselves) has been an important movement that has grown steadily in the UK, starting with people with physical and sensory disabilities and now including people with learning difficulties. People with disabilities have become increasingly vocal about their

own wishes and the wishes of their friends and colleagues with disabilities. It has been important in challenging assumptions previously made by professionals on their behalf.

- TVEI: the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative was set up in 1983 to stimulate technical and vocational education for young people aged 14 to 18. It is funded by the Department of Employment: Training Agency, but delivered by education authorities through schools and colleges. With its emphasis on certification, work-related and problem-solving skills, and use of new technologies, it has attempted to bring about considerable changes in vocational education. Designed from the start to include people of all abilities, it has also created a much wider curriculum for many young people with disabilities and provided opportunities for curriculum integration with their peers.

- Assessment and certification: traditionally many young people, particularly those with learning difficulties, left education and training with no qualification, because there was no system for recognising the skills they had gained. Equally many people with physical and sensory disabilities found it difficult to succeed in traditional examinations. In the last few years, many developments have taken place. Examining bodies have made arrangements to minimise the problems imposed by assessment systems; for example, by allowing papers to be given or received in braille, on tape, by computer or via an intermediary. Also a number of new methods of assessment leading to certification have been set up to enable more people to benefit by a recognition of their developing competence.

- Another major initiative has been CPVE - the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education. This is a one-year full-time course delivered either in schools or colleges which leads to a Statement of Achievement. It can also be undertaken part-time over a longer period. It emphasises negotiation and autonomous learning and may offer vocational tasters to participants.

- The proliferation of different forms of vocational qualifications led the Government to set up the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. This body is attempting to create a framework of vocational qualifications. It is committed to enhancing access to qualifications and sees the needs of people with disabilities as important. A project that examines issues surrounding vocational qualifications and people with disabilities is described later in this publication by Elizabeth McEvoy.

- The voluntary sector: voluntary organisations (bodies that are non-profit seeking and which generally seek to promote the interests of a particular group of people) have been particularly important to the development of services for people with disabilities. Before, and during, the 1970s they provided most of the few opportunities for vocational education post-school. Examples are the Spastics Society and National Star Centre. Many of them acted as pressure groups, notably NBHS, now Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, the furthering developments in local authority colleges

and training schemes. Many, such as the Rathbone Society, have developed high-quality YTS and ET schemes to help particular groups who were not otherwise provided for. MENCAP also, with its Pathway Employment Services, continues to further employment opportunities for people with learning difficulties.

Conclusions

Vocational education and training in the UK is complex and changing and has responded to the needs of young people with disabilities more effectively and with an increasing emphasis on integration over the last ten years.

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8. Improving employment opportunities for deaf people - the provision of vocational training through the medium of sign language

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf, and Weald College

Alistair Kent, RNID
Colin Hickman, Weald College

Introduction

This paper describes a joint project undertaken by a large national voluntary agency, a local education authority and a college of further education. They worked together to achieve the successful integration of a previously separate training programme for deaf people. Together they demonstrated a commitment to real training and support for employment for people with disabilities. The setting up of the RNID Training Centre, described here, directly addressed many of the major issues outlined in Matthew Griffiths' study; in particular those that relate to the need for inter-agency collaboration in the proper preparation of people with disabilities for employment.

The remit of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf is the largest voluntary organisation for deaf and hard of hearing people in the United Kingdom. The Institute's memorandum and articles of Association give it the remit to respond to the needs of people with all types and all degrees of hearing impairment, either by provision of direct services or by supporting professional and lay people who come into contact with people with impaired hearing. The RNID is organised into seven departments, three of which (Fundraising, Finance and Administration) have a support function. The remaining four provide direct services to consumers. The project described in this paper is located within the RNID's biggest department, that of Residential, Education and Employment Services.

Funding of the RNID

In the 1989/90 financial year, the Institute is budgeting for a turnover of approximately £9.5 million. Approximately 50% of this comes from fees and charges levied on local authorities for services provided directly to deaf people. By far the greatest propottion of this comes from the provision of Residential Services to additionally disabled deaf people who are considered unable to function in the community.

Of the remainder of the Institute's income, approximately 10% comes in the form of specific grants from central government for particular

commissioned pieces of work. (An example of this is the RNID Telephone Exchange for the Deaf, which is funded by British Telecom, The Department of Social Security and the Department of Trade and Industry.) The remainder of the Institute's income comes from voluntary donations. These are either through legacies or as a result of direct fundraising activities.

The RNID Department of Residential, Education and Employment Services

This Department, in common with all the other direct service departments of the RNID, has a dual role, namely, the provision of direct services and advocacy on behalf of consumers for the improvement of services provided by the statutory, voluntary and private sectors for deaf people. The Institute's policy is to advocate from a service base, in order that practice informs policy and that it is pressing for changes that are realistic and workable.

The Department's direct services are provided in a number of discrete but overlapping areas of work. They include the following:

- *Long-term residential care* This is for additionally disabled deaf people who are unable to live in the community. The resident population includes those who are frail and elderly, deaf people with physical or mental impairments in addition to their hearing loss, and those with social or adjustment difficulties.
- *Rehabilitation services* In order to maximise their opportunities for autonomous and independent life, some deaf adults require specialist habilitation or rehabilitation. To support this, the RNID provides specialised facilities for deaf people with physical or mental impairments, for those who are both deaf and blind and for deaf people who are recovering from a psychiatric illness.
- *Vocational training* In addition to the project which is the subject of this paper, the RNID provides direct vocational training to behaviourally disturbed deaf young adults on a residential basis, and, in collaboration with a number of statutory or private sector agencies in specialist areas, where there is an identified skill shortage of which deaf people could take advantage in order to improve their employability. As an example of this, RNID is collaborating with a Polytechnic to develop distance learning packages in computer-aided design and manufacturing, specifically for deaf people.
- *Individual casework* The Department provides a direct service to individual deaf job seekers in two areas of the UK (Liverpool and Birmingham). This is an experimental project designed to evaluate the effectiveness of specialist services as compared with those provided by the statutory authorities for helping unemployed deaf people into work. In addition, training and support for individuals in work or who are experiencing difficulty or seeking career development is provided on a referral basis.

Historical aspects of RNID's direct training provision

The impetus for the development of vocational training by the RNID originally stemmed from the activities of the Institute's Department of Communications Services. Staff working in this department had developed a number of environmental aids, such as flashing light door bells and vibrating alarm clocks, which were of use to deaf people. At the time, it proved difficult to find a commercial organisation willing to manufacture these products as they were felt to be commercially non-viable. The Institute, therefore, investigated the possibility of establishing a sheltered workshop in order to manufacture these and other devices developed by the Scientific and Technical Section of the Department of Communications Services. Preparatory work for the establishment of this project indicated that it was unlikely that the Institute would be able to recruit deaf people with the necessary skills to manufacture these devices. It was therefore decided to start a training programme, initially with the aim of creating a workforce with the skills necessary to meet the Institute's own manufacturing plans. Once the training programme was underway, it quickly became apparent that those deaf people who were being trained by the Institute were finding jobs in the electronics industry with a wide range of different employers. What originally was intended to be a short-term training programme changed in emphasis and became a continuing aspect of the Institute's work.

The consumer group for whom training is intended

Of all those with impaired hearing who might benefit from special training, it is historically those who have been either born deaf or who lose their hearing before they acquire language who have missed out most on opportunities to develop their employment potential. For individuals in this group, Sign Language, not English language, is their preferred means of communication and, in this respect, individuals can usefully be regarded as members of a language minority as well as having a disability. Members of this group typically leave school with lower achievements than their peers and, as a result, experience considerable disadvantage and discrimination when seeking employment. For this reason, the RNID decided to focus its vocational training provision on sign language users and to develop a training programme which delivered vocationally relevant skills through the medium of sign language. Typically, recruits to the training programme have tended to be young adults who have left school with very few, or no, formal qualifications, and who have either been unemployed for some time or who have been in work in low-level occupations which have come to an end. For them specialist training has been seen as a way of enabling them to re-enter the labour market.

The project - RNID Trainee Centre at Green Lanes

As a result of the Institute's decision to provide vocational training courses for deaf people, a training centre was set up in a building owned by RNID in North London. Originally a private house, this

building was situated in what is predominantly a residential area, with relatively poor access either to mainstream further education and training facilities, or to employers operating in the fields of training provided by the Institute. Two parallel courses were offered in this training centre. The first of these was a 26-week course in electronic wiring, and the second was a general work skills course, with a heavy emphasis on practical, manual activities, including simple building and plumbing work, machine operating, and electrical assembly. Initially, the course concentrated heavily on equipping trainees with direct technical or vocational skills and did not attempt to introduce them to more general matters such as employment-related literacy or numeracy, or job finding and job-seeking skills. Both courses started at the same time and ran in parallel. The programme was funded by the (then) Manpower Services Commission and RNID was paid a weekly fee for each person in training. Placement rates into employment following the course were acceptable, with between 60 and 70% of trainees finding work within three months of completing their training.

The need to change

Given that placement rates into employment, following training, stood comparison with those achieved by other centres which are providing specialist training for people with disabilities, funded by the Manpower Services Commission, and that people were coming forward to be trained, it is appropriate to ask why it was thought necesary to change what the Institute was doing.

There were a number of reasons which led to the decision, they were:

- The course content had remained static for a number of years. The training programme had reached the end of its useful life and needed to be updated to take account of the skills that will be required of employees in the future. Failure to do this would result in a substantial drop in the employability of those completing training, as they would no longer be equipped with employment-related competences. This was particularly apparent in respect of the electronics course where employers are demanding increasingly sophisticated entry skills.
- Follow-up studies on trainees completing their programme at the RNID's centre had indicated that, although technically competent to meet the demands of the jobs they were seeking, many of those completing their programme experienced difficulty due to either literacy or numeracy problems, or because of a lack of knowledge as to the most appropriate ways of seeking and keeping employment, or of progressing within work once employed.
- Changes in the pattern of employment opportunities meant that there was a decline in the number of openings available for those completing the general work skills course in the area from which trainees were recruited. There was a need to introduce opportunities for new areas of employment-related training, particularly in types of occupation where market research had

indicated that significant skill shortages existed of which deaf people could take advantage.

- The physical limitations imposed by the existing building limited potential for development in training provision.
- The increasing recognition given to the need for deaf people to be trained and retrained throughout their working life if they were to be able to develop their potential to the full and enjoy the same opportunities for progression within employment as their hearing colleagues, placed an increasing importance on the acquisition of qualifications. At best, a restricted range of opportunities to acquire qualifications could be made available in the existing set up.
- No matter how good the quality of training provided in the training centre, it could at best serve only the needs of a small proportion of deaf people who potentially might benefit from vocational training through the medium of sign language. If RNID's training services were to develop, it could not be on the basis of either expanding the existing facility, which was already operating at its maximum capacity, or by using the experience as a model for the development of services in other parts of the country.

Modernising training

- Who should we be training?
- What should we be training people to do?
- Where should we be training them?

To help us find the answers to the first question, a number of meetings with relevant individuals or groups were held. These included deaf people, social workers with deaf people, specialist careers officers and disablement resettlement officers, and representatives of voluntary organisations of, and for, deaf people. These meetings indicated that there was still a significant need for some deaf people to receive specialist training and that the support mechanisms available to provide access to mainstream training for those with impaired hearing were not appropriate for a minority who needed additional help over and above that available in the mainstream, and that this need would persist for the foreseeable future.

To help us find the answers to the second question, it was necessary to take account of a number of factors, including the demands of the labour market and where the skill shortages that deaf people could take advantage of lay, and what needed to be included in a programme of training if they were to be able to compete on equal terms with hearing people seeking the same opportunities. To help, a survey of the employment market in the South East was undertaken.

The survey involved consultation with major employers in the public and private sectors, with statutory and private employment agencies, including the Department of Employment and the Careers Service, and

a survey of vacancy advertisements in the local and national press. This confirmed the initial impression that practically based work opportunities were in the decline, and that there was a significant unmet demand for people with clerical and commercial skills (especially in the areas of keyboarding and computer literacy) and in the social care field. In order to develop the structure of its training programmes, the RNID sought advice from a number of bodies with relevant knowledge in this area. Of primary importance in this context was the Skills Training Agency.

This Agency is a division of the Department of Employment Training Agency (as the Manpower Services Commission has now become) which is responsible for ensuring that government-funded training programmes run either in its own skill centres or are provided under agency agreements by others, that they are up to date and able to respond to the demands of employers, and that they equip trainees with skills that will enable them to compete effectively now and in the future. The consultancy support provided by the Skills Training Agency resulted in a number of recommendations. These were:

- that the content of the training programme should be made broader both in its technical content and also by the introduction of general work-related skills and employment-related literacy and numeracy;
- that a modularised approach be adopted;
- that assessment and record-keeping procedures be improved;
- that work experience with employers become an integral part of each trainees' programme;
- that trainees be given access to qualifications;
- that training programmes be individualised, rather than taught as if they were one course to a group of individuals.

Following consultation with STA, a number of meetings were held with examining and validating bodies, including the City and Guilds of London Institute and the Royal Society of Arts, to explore the most appropriate way to introduce opportunities for trainees to acquire relevant vocational qualifications, or, if this was not possible at least to achieve some form of recognition that would open up opportunities for them to progress to further training once they had completed their programme with the RNID. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications was also consulted. As a result of these discussions, it became apparent that although it was not impossible to offer access to qualifications for trainees in the existing set up, the process would be considerably simplified by formal association with an institution that was already recognised as an examination centre.

The third question which needed answering was, where should the institute be providing training? The exercise had led us to the conclusion that it would be inappropriate to continue to provide training to deaf people based on a small segregated specialist unit operating outside the mainstream of post-compulsory education and training, from an isolated site in a residential area of North London.

Having taken this decision, it was necessary to identify where training should be situated in the future.

Criteria for a new centre

i) That the new provision should be capable of providing broad-based training in a wide range of different occupational areas.

ii) That it should offer access to qualifications.

iii) That employer-based training should form an integral part of the programme.

iv) That opportunities for the social and personal development of deaf people coming onto training programmes should be maximised.

v) That the facilities and resources available for training should be up-to-date and reflect best practice.

vi) That training should be provided in an environment which supported the needs of those with impaired hearing, and where the integration of training opportunities for deaf people was seen as a positive development rather than an imposition.

A range of training providers was considered and it was decided to seek a partnership with a mainstream college of further education rather than an employer-based organisation or an approved training organisation.

A series of exploratory meetings was held with representatives of local colleges, local education authorities, and specialist careers officers who were familiar with provision made for people with special needs in colleges of further education.

From this exercise a short-list was drawn up and an approach was made to Weald College in the London Borough of Harrow. This college was selected because it already had an established programme of opportunities for hearing-impaired people. It was also the subject of a development programme by the local education authority which would result in a wide range of modern facilities, making it well-equipped to deliver training in the areas identified by the RNID's market research as being relevant to improving employment opportunities for deaf people. The college was located in a prosperous part of London with good access to a wide range of employment opportunities. This, and the range of the college's facilities, are described briefly in the next section.

Harrow

Harrow is a suburban, residential borough of Greater London with a population of approximately 200,000. It is a relatively affluent district with a very high proportion of owner-occupied accommodation and residents of social classes I and II. The greater proportion of the Borough's workforce is employed in the service sector (67.5%) and the major employment opportunites are in distribution, commerce, public administration and education. Educational expectations are high and

the percentage of students both staying on in full-time education at 16 and going on to higher education is among the highest in Great Britain.

Education in the Borough

In 1987 Harrow reorganised its post-16 educational provision so that all non-advanced, full-time, part-time, adult and continuing provision was delivered by three tertiary colleges: Elm Park, Greenhill and Weald. All three colleges offer a similar basic curriculum of 'A' levels, GCSE, BTEC, Secretarial, CPVE, Access, part-time vocational and recreational courses; and each college is also developing distinctive curriculum areas and an individual identity. In this way, all those in Harrow and surrounding boroughs seeking education opportunities are offered as wide and comprehensive a choice as possible.

Weald College

In 1988/89, Weald College had 1,260 full-time students, 7,000 enrolments on part-time day and evening courses and 142 full-time lecturing staff. The site was previously occupied by a sixth form college with a high academic reputation for 'A' level courses, a perception which remains among potential students in the high schools and local community. It is the intention of the college to maintain this high-quality provision, while developing areas of excellence in vocational courses including Catering, Travel and Tourism and Leisure. Computing, Health Studies, Access to Nursing and to B Ed., and responding to the needs of the local community. During its first year, the college made the following statement of its philosophy and aims:

The College's mission statement

'Weald College exists to serve the needs of the community and thus, indirectly, the country as a whole. A mark of its effectiveness is the way in which it perceives those needs and how flexible, resourceful and adaptable it is to meet them. The college community comprises groups of individuals with separate but complementary roles. Each of them has to have a framework within which to operate and space to develop professionally and/or academically. Each also has to be aware of the part it must play in the development of the whole college ethos.

Students will come to college for a variety of reasons. Some of them will be overt (most obviously the need for a particular qualification) and some of them may be barely recognised by the individual concerned (where further education provides an emotional refuge from a variety of personal problems). It is important, then, that we be vigilant in providing a range of opportunities with a caring, student-centred approach so that our belief in an open access policy works in practice.

The College has the following aims:

i) to provide a centre for post-16 education grounded in an ethos which is generated from a student-centred approach and curriculum offer which values the development of individual talents and aptitudes;

ii) to provide a community college which is responsive to the needs of the local neighbourhood, schools and industry, and which is sensitive to their requirements and flexible in its resources provision;

iii) to develop the potential of all students in terms of academic aptitudes, individual skills and aesthetic awareness. To provide appropriate aesthetic, cultural and recreational opportunities as an integral part of the enhanced curriculum;

iv) to develop for each student critical self-awareness, independence of thought and respect for others;

v) to provide equal opportunities in terms of access to the curriculum and use of resources for all, irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, gender or social class. To have special regard for the needs of students with special educational needs and with sensory and physical disabilities.'

Equal opportunities policy

The College equal opportunities working party drew up the following statement:

Equal Opportunities Statement

'Weald as a Tertiary College intends to respond to the whole community by providing education, social, vocational and cultural opportunities for everyone of 16 or over.

We wish to provide a positive and welcoming atmosphere for groups currently under-represented in the education system. These may be members of ethnic minorities, the unemployed, women, older students or those with physical or mental disabilities.

The College is part of a multicultural society and acknowledges the responsibilities that this entails. The Governing Body and members of the College are therefore committed to a policy of equal opportunities. This means providing access onto courses and creating an environment in which people treat each other with mutual respect.

We do not wish this to be a paper exercise. Our progress in implementing this policy will be continually monitored (by the Equal Opportunities Committee and the Governing Body).

For students with special educational needs, the College is committed both to supporting and accessing students on to

mainstream courses, and, where appropriate, to running discrete courses, as for example, the YTS General Workskills course for trainees with moderate learning difficulties. The College has a small Hearing Impaired Unit organised by one full-time lecturer for the hearing impaired and several part-time specialists. This unit, too, delivers discrete courses in Basic Education, Signing and Lip Reading and provides support for students and lecturers, to enable hearing-impaired students to have access to a variety of mainstream courses.'

The introduction of the training programme to Weald College

Having identified the nature of a sign language training programme for deaf people and its key elements, and established preliminary contact with a further education college that was eager to co-operate in the development of appropriate training provision, it was necessary to begin detailed planning in order to ensure that the transfer of training was successful.

The planning process

At this point, an external factor arose, in the introduction of Employment Training as the vehicle by which all central government-funded adult training was to be delivered. Prior to the introduction of ET, RNID's training of deaf adults had been funded by the Manpower Services Commission on an individually negotiated contract. The relevant officials within MSC had been kept informed of the proposed changes at every stage and supported our envisaged changes.

The accommodation

Equally fortunately, the proposed mix of technical training, general work-related skill development, basic literacy and numeracy and work experience, fitted in with the proposed format for ET. Before the detailed planning with Weald College could be undertaken, it was, however, important that agreemnt in principle was obtained from those working in the residential Training Centres unit of the Department of Employment, as this would be the body with responsibility ultimately for agreeing the training contract and providing the necessary funding. Once this agreement in principle was reached, it was possible to plan in detail. The process involved a series of preliminary meetings between representatives of the RNID and the college, at which detailed specifications were drawn up of the Institute's space and resource requirements for the successful delivery of training. These included the requirement for workshop and classroom facilities, the use of specialist resources such as computers and word processing equipment, and the administrative support that staff would need to function effectively.

These calculations were based on the assumption that, on average, 40% of a trainee's time on the programme would be spent on employer-

based training and 60% would be in college on directed training activities. Of this 60%, a proportion would be in integrated settings where trainees were participating in programme activities alongside hearing students, and a proportion would either be in small groups, or working on a one-to-one basis with specialist staff.

From these preliminary calculations, it became apparent very quickly that the college would experience great difficulty in providing sufficient workshop space as its existing commitments meant that these facilities were already extensively used. The Local Authority's development plan for the college envisaged that more workshop space would become available within a couple of years, and for this reason the RNID decided to install temporary facilities to supplement the College's existing workshop space until the building programme was completed. Drawing up the specification for this required collaboration between the RNID's instructional staff, lecturing staff at the College (in order to estabish what would and would not be available), and the Estates Officers of both the Institute and the College. Once the specification had been agreed, the case had to be argued with the planning authority, for whom the installation of further temporary buildings on the College site represented a departure from the development plan for the zone. Lobbying to obtain permission for this development required concerted action on the part of the participants until planning approval was given. Further collaboration between the Institute, the College and the Technical Services Department of the Local Authority was necessary in order to ensure that adequate gas and electricity supplies were available to the new workshop once it was installed.

The curriculum

While this detailed practical work was being undertaken, it was also necessary to plan the way in which the new training programmes would be delivered. This involved a switch from teaching a course to a group, to operating a series of individually planned and negotiated training programmes based on an assessment of need and an individually determined action plan.

In order to make this happen, the existing instructional staff of the RNID's Trainee Centre had a staff development programme devised for them which involved them in a series of visits and training sessions to acquaint them with the basic principles of this way of working. In addition, a senior member of staff from the Institute's Education and Employment Division was seconded to work with the staff for 40% of his time over a period of four months, specifically to ensure that they had the necessary skill and confidence to manage this new pattern of working.

Marketing the provision

At the same time as this developmental work was being undertaken, action to market the provision to potential consumers and to the statutory referral agencies was in hand. A series of meetings was held with, for example, specialist careers officers and DROs at which the

philosophy and the scope of the provision was explained. New publicity leaflets were prepared and distributed widely. Direct marketing to consumers was by means of presentation to groups of deaf people in local deaf clubs, and by direct contact with special schools and colleges. The London Specialist Job Club for Deaf People was also kept informed as a number of unemployed deaf people using that resource may well require retraining in order to improve their employability.

This prelinary work was undertaken to a tight timetable starting in April 1988, when the decision was taken to upgrade and modernise the RNID's direct training provision to deaf people through the medium of sign language, and culminating in April 1989, when the transfer of training was made from the existing trainees centre to the new location at Weald College.

While those employed by the RNID were undertaking preparatory work up to the transfer of functions, the staff at Weald College were also engaged in a parallel programme to prepare for the integration of this new venture with the existing pattern of provision at the college. This parallel programme is described in the next section.

The college response to the approach from RNID

When the RNID approached Weald College with the proposal to move the training courses from Green Lanes onto the Weald site, we felt two contrasting, but equally strong, emotions. The first was simply fear, that awful sinking in the stomach. How shall we cope? Having just opened a new college, with a new staff who did not really know each other and who were being asked to teach new courses with new approaches, did we really want something else that was new? How shall we find the accommodation, the storage space, the support? How will the trainees from a small 'family' react to the large site and the overcrowded canteen?

The second was excitement. Here was the chance to put into practice the ideals and philosphy of the equal opportunities policy; to provide access to the curriculum for all students; to convert pious hopes to practical plans.

On some days the excitement predominated, on others, particularly the one when the Lecturer for People with Hearing Impairment announced she would be on maternity leave for the whole planning period, fear! But it was the combination of the two which focused our collective mind on formulating an action plan for implementing the transfer and the successful integration of trainees and staff into the College.

An individual trainee

Because this provision is still very new, it is not possible to describe the experiences of someone who has completed the programme. However, one experience might serve to illustrate the service provided and the aspirations we have for the service.

Jeremy was referred to RNID's vocational training service after a period of rehabilitation at one of the Institute's specialist centres. He had a history of disturbed behaviour, and on assessment was found to have moderate learning difficulties. A training programme was devised for Jeremy which would introduce him to a range of routine occupations. The aim of this programme was to ensure that he acquired sufficient understanding of what it meant to be at work to enable him to hold down a job in the future. At this stage of his training, it was inappropriate to concentrate on specific vocational skills as he did not have the necessary experience to make a realistic vocational choice. In parallel with this programme, he was introduced to work-related literacy and numeracy skills and given the opportunity to try a range of work experiences.

This programme was monitored closely by the instructional staff responsible for Jeremy's programme. They were also available to provide support for those making work-experience opportunities available to Jeremy and to ensure communication between Jeremy and the hearing people with whom he worked so that he understood the tasks that were expected of him. This involved staff in working with Jeremy on employers' premises, explaining and interpreting the requirements of the job to him and ensuring that he understood both the rules and regulations and the social constraints of the particular workplace. This support was particularly important where new duties were introduced and when a change of routine was required

Initially, support was provided at a high level, but as Jeremy gained in confidence, so the amount of support that he needed diminished until, over time, he was able to operate almost independently. Given the complexity of his needs, Jeremy was assessed as being unable to hold down a job in open employment. However he is considered employable under sheltered conditions and, at the time of writing, plans are well advanced for him to be employed under the Sheltered Placement Scheme by one of the employers who has provided a work experience opportunity for him. During the course of his training programme, Jeremy has gained in self-confidence and in social maturity to the point where employment is a realistic option. This was certainly not the case at the beginning of his training programme. Without appropriate planned training, Jeremy would almost certainly have faced the prospect of long-term unemployment, and the loss of skills and self-esteem associated with this.

Monitoring and evaluation - Individual Action Plans

Monitoring and evaluation of service delivery is a vital part of the operation. This is important not only to ensure that individuals who come forward for training receive realistic and relevant programmes which actually improve their ability and lead to work, but also so that the RNID can establish the value of the programme and use it as a basis for the development of further training development opportunities elsewhere in the UK. To this end, the primary vehicle for monitoring and evaluation is the Individual Action Plan negotiated with each trainee as part of their Employment Training programme.

The Action Plan is based on an *assessment of need* and a *recognition of prior experience*. It will give details of skills to be developed, experiences to be undertaken, and specified performance standards to be aimed for, including specifying vocational qualifications or other forms or certification for which the individual will be working.

Ongoing support

The ultimate measure of the programme's success will be whether or not trainees obtain work. Each trainee will be followed up at regular intervals after the end of their training programme, and staff from the centre will be available to provide *ongoing advice and support* for those who need it, including professional staff (specialist careers officers, DROs and SPS and support workers who may wish to avail themselves of this facility).

Other criteria will also be used to evaluate the success of the project. The College's mission statement emphasises the College's commitment to its local community so it will be important for the joint programmes to *attract local deaf people* who live in the catchment area. There has been contact already with deaf people who are curious about the development. The provision is to be marketed by the College as an integral part of its marketing strategy.

Another criterion for success will be the extent to which the range of opportunities within the College for deaf people increases. From the College's perspective, the modularisation of much of the FE curriculum will suit the roll-on/roll-off pattern of provision required by ET, making it much easier to incorporate specific elements into each person's individually negotiated programme. Apart from the integration between deaf and hearing people during the formal part of the training programme, the degree to which *individuals mix socially*, away from the programme, will be another key indicator in evaluating the programme.

New developments

A move such as the one described here acquires its own impetus and, when the will is there to make things happen, creates opportunities for the development of new ways of working. In a relatively short time there have been a number of joint initiatives based on this project. These are:

- the joint appointment of a lecturer (0.5) by the RNID and Weald College to promote links and develop opportunities for deaf people. This person will work part of his time with 'RNID' students, and part with 'mainstream' students, freeing some time for the college's lecturers for hearing-impaired students to work with 'RNID' trainees;
- the creation of a 'grass-roots' support group in the college, comprising RNID staff, YTS staff, representatives of the College's Faculty of Design, Art and Craft, the Support Services Officer and the College Counsellor;

- networking of the RNID's computers and those belonging to the YTS scheme;
- sharing of work experience contacts.

Lessons learned

Although the exercise has generally gone smoothly, there are a number of aspects which, with the benefit of hindsight could have been carried out more effectively. The most important of these is the level of attention that was given to detailed curriculum planning prior to making the move. Much of the responsibility for this was devolved by the RNID onto the Unit Leader, and by the college onto its Specialist Lecturer for Students with Impaired Hearing. Unfortunately, this last person went on maternity leave almost immediately, and despite several attempts it proved impossible to replace her during the period of her leave. The lack of this specialised support meant that assumptions were made about access to facilities, knowledge, and understanding of the needs of deaf people which were not necessarily true. As with much provision for people with disabilities, there has been too much institutional reliance on the expertise and experience of one person. There was a need for more staff development to enable RNID's staff to adapt to the new demands of the Employment Training programme, particularly in the areas of individual programme planning and negotiation.

Conclusion

The RNID is committed to equality of employment opportunity for deaf people. If this commitment is to be more than mere rhetoric then it is essential that deaf people have access to the same range of education and training opportunities as any other section of the community. The development of the unit at Weald College, and the opportunity for expansion provided by this model of integrated service delivery, as compared with the previous pattern of separate training, are a reflection of this commitment. Time alone will tell how successful it will be, but the model of consensus, a voluntary organisation and a statutory body working together in partnership to produce individually negotiated and planned programmes of vocational education and training, with inbuilt opportunities for access to qualifications, progression to further study and an enhancement of employability, would seem to represent a positive vision for the future.

9. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications and Remploy: a major two-year project

The National Council for Vocational Qualfications and Remploy

Elizabeth McEvoy, Remploy

Introduction

Less than half the population obtains a vocational qualification and amongst those groups which traditionally have the most difficulty in accessing vocational training are people with disabilities. This paper describes the work of an important two-year project, funded by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and carried out by Remploy, that is exploring many of the issues relating to national vocational qualifications and people with disabilities. The Further Education Unit is building on the work of this project with an initiative, funded by the Training Agency, that will explore the role of further education in enabling access to a national framework of qualifications for people with disabilities.

The National Council for Vocational Qualifications and the need for vocational reform

NCVQ was set up by the Government in 1986 as a result of concern over the relevance of, and access to, vocational qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Vocational qualifications validate assessments made of the standards of competence which have been achieved by a person as a result of education, training and experience in the workplace.

NCVQ aims to reform the old incoherent system of vocational qualifications and put a coherent system in place which will cover all occupational areas and be accessible to people of all ages from 16 upwards.

Many of the newly designed and adapted qualifications are known as *National Vocational Qualifications* (NVQs) and are based upon national standards of occupational competence determined through a range of lead bodies which will eventually cover all the main occupational areas in the British economy (see below).

Occupational competence is defined by NCVQ as the skills, knowledge, understanding and ability in application needed to perform a job or range of jobs. For example, there is currently an NVQ for sewing machinists which will be recognised and used in England,

Wales and Northern Ireland by both young and old people, and by both trainees and employees.

All NVQs should be in place by 1991 by which time NCVQ will become self-funding.

The National Vocational Qualification Framework

NVQs are based on the needs of employment and embody the skills, knowledge and level of performance relevant to the work activity. NVQs are based upon *standards of occupational competence* and are written in *unit, element and performance criteria* format.

Units of competence are sub-divisions of the qualifications and can be accredited separately and accumulated towards an NVQ by the individual. An element of competence is the smallest specification of competence and is accompanied by a statement of the performance criteria which indicates the standards required for competent performance.

Lead industry bodies (LIB) are responsible for defining the standards of performance upon which units and elements of competence within a specific occupation area will be based.

LIBs are designed by the Training Agency to define occupational competence in a particular industry, for example, the Clothing and Allied Products Industry Training Board defines the occupational competence for the clothing and textiles industry.

An *awarding body* (AB) is responsible for awarding NVQs and for moderating national standards within NVQs. An AB must first be approved by NCVQ for these purposes. The AB may be an LIB or a traditional examining body such as City and Guilds.

Levels of qualifications

The following definitions provide a guide to the levels at which NVQs may be accredited within the framework:

- Level I: competence in the performance of work activities which are in the main routine and predictable or provide a broad foundation, primarily as a basis for progression;
- Level II: competence in a broader and more demanding range of work activities involving greater individual responsibility and autonomy than at Level I;
- Level III: competence in skilled areas that involves performance of a broad range of work activities, including many that are complex and non-routine. In some areas, supervisory competence may be a requirement at this level;
- Level IV: competence in the performance of complex, technical, specialised and professional work activities, including those involving design, planning and problem-solving, with a significant

degree of personal accountability. In many areas competence in supervision or management will be a requirement at this level.

The NVQ framework should, through its design, comprehensive coverage and credit accumulation system, serve to enhance access to vocational qualifications for the individual .

In addition, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications has also clearly stated its commitment to open access in its criteria for NVQs:

> 'Awards should be free from any barriers which restrict access to individuals wishing to obtain it.'

Remploy Ltd.

Remploy Ltd. w as established by the Disabled Persons Employment Act, 1945.

The aim of the company is to provide meaningful employment for severely disabled people. Today Remploy employs 11,000 people, 9,000 of whom are registered as being severely disabled.

Remploy's enployees require support for all types of physical disabilities, learning difficulties and social needs, thus representing people with a wide range of disabilities. Employees' disabilities range from epilepsy and amputations to psychoneurosis.

Remploy has 94 factories in England, Scotland and Wales and is involved in manufacturing products in 52 occupations including printing, packing and assembly, furniture, engineering, textiles, and medical products.

Remploy is a non-profit-making organisation, therefore any surplus is ploughed back into the company and shared amongst the employees. The employees receive a basic rate of pay equal to other manufacturing organisations for the jobs they perform, plus bonuses if they produce over a third of what a non-disabled person can produce.

Although Remploy is described as offering 'supported employment', this should not detract from the fact that it is a commercial organisation. It should also be stressed that Remploy's employees encounter the same pressures as their competitors in 'open industry' and do not seek to lower nationally agreed definitions of competence.

The concerns and issues of the product described here are shared by many other organisations providing support for people with disabilities.

Background to the project

In 1987 the Government showed its commitment te the introduction of NVQs by making vocational qualifications a requirements of Government-led training schemes, namely the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and Employment Training (ET). YTS was introduced by the government to provide two years' planned training for young people aged between 16 and 18 years. Employment Training was introduced

by the government in 1988 to provide up to one year of planned training for the long-term unemployed over the age of 18.

Remploy, NCVQ and the Training Agency all share a common objective - *to open access to vocational qualifications* for trainees with disabilities so that these people might gain recognition for their achievements.

The project described below has become a forerunner for other work that addresses similar issues and concerns about access to vocational qualifications for people with disabilities.

Aims and objectives of the NCVQ/Remploy project

The aims of the project were to establish open access to qualifications for individuals with disabilities. The NVQ framework would be used in developing suitable accreditation based on industry-defined standards in the following occupational areas: Textiles - Sewing; Knitwear; Engineering; Light Manufacture; Packaging and Printing.

At the end of the project, facilities would be established at six locations to allow trainees with disabilities to gain access to qualifications in the areas outlined.

In addition, a report including recommendations for extending the approach to other occupational areas would be presented to the steering group where agencies such as awarding bodies, NCVQ, education and the voluntary sector were represented.

The work of the project to date

The project has identified vocational qualifications for each occupation and has worked with the bodies concerned to develop each vocational qualification for implementation and for ease of access.

The work of the project has raised awareness, both within Remploy and outside, about the support required for people with disabilities and the benefits of gaining access to 'mainstream' vocational qualifications.

Pilot qualifications are running successfully in factories where access has been made possible. However, it has become apparent that there are areas that still need development. Greater awareness nationally of the employment potential, abilities and support needs of people with disabilities would lead to greater access to vocational qualifications.

By 1991 all NVQs should be in place allowing access to vocational qualifications in occupational areas where none existed previously and providing the first 'step on the ladder' for progression through the NVQ framework for people who had previously been excluded. Work still needs to be done in certain occupational areas, particularly those in which considerable numbers are employed, such as manufacturing, before access to vocational qualifications for all becomes a reality.

The project also aim to accelerate change in developing a standards-based qualification that allows individuals to be *assessed against industry standards in the work-place*. Competent *work-place assessors* are essential if

the shift towards industry-defined standards is to be managed successfully in a working environment.

People with disabilities may receive training in *core skills* such as communication, numeracy and literacy skills, which the project would like to be recognised and accredited (see Matthew Griffith's study for a further discussion of core skills).

The shift away from training courses and towards achievement and outcomes will be accentuated by encouraging the use of *flexible alternative assessment methods* which suit the needs of an individual.

It is no longer necessary to pursue a traditional college course. Competence can be achieved through work, self-directed study or though many life experiences. The project is encouraging the use of the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), through which a trainee is assessed against, or provides evidence of, past achievements. This is particularly valuable for people with disabilities who may not have access to the same educational and pre-vocational experiences as their peers.

Future action

In its second year, the project will continue to explore these issues and concentrate on raising awareness about this area of work. It will collaborate with other organisations and seek to extend its influence beyond the employees of Remploy to all potential trainees with disabilities.